

Interpreting New Testament Narratives

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Interpreting New Testament Narratives

Recovering the Author's Voice

By

Eric Douglass



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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

*The book is dedicated to my family:
Felecia, Daniel, Michael, and Haley*

*And to the many people who gave so freely
of their time, advice, and expertise:
Elizabeth Malbon, Paul Anderson, Ken Chatlos, Gary Staszak, Sam
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Introduction

Cross-cultural reading of the Bible is not a matter of choice. Since the Bible is a Mediterranean document written for Mediterranean readers, it presumes the cultural resources and worldview available to a reader socialized in the Mediterranean world.¹



Statements such as this, telling readers to follow certain cultural conventions, are commonly found in the literature. Note the similar statement in Bruce Malina's book on cultural anthropology: "If meaning derives from a social system ... then any adequate understanding of the Bible requires some understanding of *the social system embodied in the words* that make up our sacred scripture."² This is even the case for the narrative critic James Resseguie, who writes: "The narrative critic joins the authorial audience—that is, *the audience envisioned by the implied author of a narrative*—with the aim of reading the text as the author intended."³ In each, the critic marshals evidence to show how texts are located in cultural or textual structures that have become codified as conventions. Once these conventions are discovered, reading proceeds according to a method that values those conventions.

But all are underlain by the same troubling question: why should readers follow these conventions? All too often readers are expected to follow these, as if such were natural way of reading. But there are no 'laws of reading' that require readers to do so. Following conventions is a matter of choice, as the schools of deconstruction and reader-response have clearly shown. Indeed, schools that employ resistant readings routinely suggest that readers read against the grain of various cultural and literary conventions.

Perhaps a better way of formulating the issue is to separate the reader's recognition of conventions from the reader's choice to follow the same. For

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- 1 Richard Rohrbaugh, "Introduction," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 1.
 - 2 Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 2; italics mine.
 - 3 James Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 39; italics mine.

example, the recognition issue in methods such as structuralism, classical narratology, and New Criticism (objective methods), is to identify the formal qualities in a text and ask what kind of readings these produce. But the second issue, of choice to follow, asks why readers *should follow these structures once they are identified*? It is simply assumed that readers will follow these structures, as if such were a natural way of reading. Or consider sociologic, anthropologic, and historical readings, which identify specific cultural and historical connections, and relate these to various aspects of the author's culture. Their recognition question is: what models, institutions, or historical events are used to understand textual elements, so that they fit into the author's culture? But the question of choice is: *why locate the text's elements in the author's culture in the first place*? Or consider Marxist and feminist methods, which employ a hermeneutic of suspicion that identifies class structure, patriarchy, and androcentric world views. Their recognition question is: what are the ideological structures in the text, and how does one resist them? But the question of choice is: *why follow the text in constructing these ideological stances in the first place*?

The literary world offers a variety of answers to these questions about choice. To begin, many groups have no interest in following the text. Some see following as a passive exercise, and they desire a more creative engagement in the construction of their own meaning. Others suggest that texts are a reproduction of culture, and culture contains damaging ideologies. For this reason, texts should never be followed. Yet others state that readers engage texts with specific interests, such as the desire for aesthetic pleasure or vicarious experience, and following the text may not maximize these. Some even suggest that the text is simply an object, and objects have no rights. Hence, there is no necessity to follow the structure or codes in the text.

Our answer stands opposed to these. We begin with the recognition that the text is an instance of the author's voice, coupled to the assertion that it is ethically problematic to manipulate or silence anyone's voice. Authors are not objects to be moved around like so many chess pieces. Rather, following Martin Buber, each human is a Thou, so that his or her voice should be treated with respect, and this means allowing those voices—so long silent and too often silenced—to be heard again. As E.D. Hirsch writes, texts are “an extension and expression of men in the social domain,” and so should be treated as “ends in themselves.”⁴ Since any construction of meaning is under the control of the powerful reader, the reader's commitment to these ethical assumptions underlies our understanding of interpretation.

4 E.D. Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 90.

This path begins with the recognition that authors expect their texts to be read in specific ways. For example, authors design their texts for a particular audience, and so employ that audience's language and culture. Indeed, Peter Rabinowitz suggests that authors "cannot begin to fill up a blank page without making assumptions about the readers' beliefs, knowledge, and familiarity with conventions."⁵ For this reason, readers who begin with the desire to 'hear the author's voice,' choose to read with the language and culture of the intended audience. These readers use historical, sociologic, and anthropologic methods to characterize that culture prior to reading. Hence, we agree with the opening statement of this introduction, that the New Testament should be read from the position of first-century Mediterranean culture, only we ground this in ethical assumptions.

Furthermore, authors expect readers to follow the narrative structures employed in their texts. Readers are under no obligation to do so and may even read against the grain of these structures. But if they desire to hear the author's voice, they will follow the rhetoric, as located in the author's culture. For this reason, our model readers employ certain aspects of narrative, rhetorical, and New Critical methods, again grounding this choice in ethical assumptions.

Beyond the mechanics of reading, authors anticipate that readers will grant some validity to their meanings, and so effect change in the readers' understanding of the world. As Wayne Booth notes: "Most authors would be distressed if we said, after our reading, that nothing we found in it carried over to our 'real' selves."⁶ Authors design their meanings to have validity for their target audience and future audiences. Yet authors cannot imagine how a culture will change and so cannot reasonably expect the original meaning to have relevance for future generations. Hence arises the need for translation, where the goal is to shape the meaning so that it functions in the same way for the new audience as it did for the original audience. This goal is grounded in ethical assumptions of fidelity to the author's voice.

Finally, authors are often unaware of their own ideological commitments. Hence arises the need for critique. Critique is designed to expose the ideological structures encoded in the narrative, whether of the embedded culture or of the (implied) author. Here our model readers produce second readings of the text, using methods to create other voices, such as a feminist voice and a Marxist voice. Hence, we endorse the need for ideological critique, only we ground these second readings in ethical assumptions about the nature of culture.

5 Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 21.

6 Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 151.

Taken together, these aspects form the core components for an ethical reading of the text. Our model readers begin with a desire to hear the author's voice and embody this by turning to discoverable authorial intentions. While authorial intentions are often reduced to the issue of 'meaning in the author's mind,' the author's mind is inaccessible, and any construction of it from biographical and psychological materials is unreliable. Indeed, authors do not envision readers who know or have researched anything about their personal lives.⁷ They do not expect readers to begin with some hypothetical construction of the author, or to read from that perspective.⁸ Reading from such a perspective turns the text into an allegory of the author's biography. Instead, authors expect readers to come to the text with the language and culture of the intended audience.

Upon applying this culture, authors expect readers to follow the narrative's design without resistance, to struggle with the challenging aspects, to piece the many elements of the narrative together, and to enter into dialogue with the constructed meanings. While some scholars call this a passive process, it is anything but passive. It involves constructing textual elements, wrestling with subjective elements, creating and experiencing the events, abstracting events to 'meaning bits,' synthesizing these bits into themes, accounting for and resolving conflicting themes, and producing meanings that may be completely new to the reader.

Now, because this model of interpretation is rooted in ethical assumptions, it falls into the category of ethical criticism. Ethical criticism has several branches, usually focusing on one of the following: the author's responsibilities to the reader, the reader's responsibility to his or her own self, or the reader's responsibilities to the author.⁹ The first branch, the author's responsibility to readers, recognizes that narrative experiences have a shaping influence on readers. As Lennard Davis writes: "My very sense of myself comes out of the pages of novels as much as it comes out of the working-class apartment in the Bronx ... My notions of beauty, truth, and reality peel off the pages of these works."¹⁰ While Davis' analysis is a bit overdrawn, his point is illustrated

7 This was a common step in Romantic criticism, under the expectation that art was a genuine expression of the author's self, so that the more readers knew about the author, the better they understood the text.

8 This is called 'hypothetical intentionalism;' on the classification, see Sherri Irvin, "Authors, Intentions and Literary Meaning," *Philosophy Compass* 1/2 (2006): 114, accessed June 5, 2012, doi:10.1111/j.1747-9991.2006.00016.x.

9 This scheme generally follows Booth's thinking (*The Company We Keep*, 125–137).

10 Lennard Davis, *Resisting Novels* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 1–2. Similarly, Booth, *The Company We Keep*, 227, 151–153.

in Nazi children's literature, which explicitly attempted to shape young readers. While the connection between the actual author and the text is tortuous, taking detours through the implied author and culture, it can still be traced. For this reason, authors bear some responsibility for the shaping influences they deposit in the world. To assume otherwise is to suggest that authors have no voice—or at least a voice with no significance. While these issues are important, they are not the central focus of this text.

The second branch, that readers are responsible to themselves, recognizes that readers are not simply shaped or overwritten by narratives, but retain the capacity to evaluate narrative meaning. No matter how realistic a narrative seems, or how emotionally and personally involved readers become, they are still responsible for evaluating the events and their meanings. This type of evaluation is wide ranging, as it extends to every aspect of the reading process, from engaging characters to evaluating story-meaning. For example, when readers identify with a murderous character, they participate with the murderer in his or her acts, and this suggests ethical concerns. Indeed, Plato writes that readers “should not depict or be skillful at imitating any kind of illiberality or baseness, lest from imitation they should come to be what they imitate.”¹¹ Of course, the opposite is also true: “Literature, many have argued, refines the sensibilities, militates against egoistic self-enclosure, models choices.”¹² The point is that narrative experience expands the self through the mechanism of vicarious experience, thereby affecting the reader's moral development, use of empathy, tolerance of other perspectives, and ethical decision making. The question, for this branch, is how to evaluate these expansions. We will deal with this branch in Chapter 7, where we specifically address the readers' means of evaluating otherness—for without this, narratives risk functioning as propaganda.

The third branch, that readers have certain responsibilities to the author, is the central focus of this book. As noted earlier, we conceive of authors as subjects who reproduce their culture and their subjectivity in the text, so that the text functions as their voice in the world. This means that reading represents a confrontation with the other. As Adam Newton notes: “One faces a text as one might face a person, having to confront the claims raised by that very

11 Plato, *The Republic*, 111.395, in *Philosophies of Art and Beauty*, tr. Benjamin Jowett, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 20.

12 Geoffrey Harpham, “Ethics and Literary Criticism,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 372.

immediacy.”¹³ Or, as M.M. Bakhtin states, readers “always arrive, in the final analysis, at the human voice, which is to say we come up against the human being.”¹⁴ This intuition, that texts function as voices, suggests that ethical considerations underlie reading. The most basic consideration is that each text is an instance of the author’s voice, and as such is engaged as a subject for conversation and not an object for manipulation. Here Booth writes about reading under the metaphor of conversation: “Must I not also accept the responsibility to enter into serious dialogue with the author about how his or her values join or conflict with mine?”¹⁵

While many authors have written about ethical criticism, few offer interpretive moves to fulfill such a design. Most begin with the readers’ experience of the text, addressing how stories count as experiences and how experiences shape readers. The narrative’s events are generally constructed by applying an established interpretive method, such as New Criticism or narrative criticism, so that readers have events upon which to respond. Ethical practices are then brought to bear, so that the events are evaluated and their shaping effects made conscious. In short, the ethical practices are engaged *after constructing the narrative events*.

We are suggesting, instead, that ethics be engaged prior to the initiation of reading. If the text is the author’s voice, then ethical considerations determine the approach to reading and the way meaning is constructed. While we are not the first to suggest this path, we are shaping this path in a different way. To clarify these differences, let us briefly consider the ethical approaches of E.D. Hirsch and Adam Newton. Hirsch grasps the text as an expression of the author and believes that it should be treated as an end in itself.¹⁶ He matches this to a psychological reconstruction of the author, reducing the author’s mental world to descriptions, so that the text can be understood by anyone who assumes this authorial perspective.¹⁷ Here Hirsch assumes that the author

13 Adam Newton, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 11.

14 M.M. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, transl. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), Kindle edition, Kindle locations 3611–3612.

15 Booth, *The Company We Keep*, 135.

16 Cf. Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation*, 90.

17 The interpreter can “reproduce in himself the author’s ‘logic,’ his attitudes, his cultural givens, in short, his world ... the imaginative reconstruction of the speaking subject” (E.D. Hirsch, “Objective Interpretation,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch [New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2001], 1707). This reduces the author to a collection of predicates, and so is a rejection of subjectivity.

reproduces his or her mental world in a hyper-normal way, as if the implied author were an exact reproduction of the actual author.¹⁸

In contrast, we recognize that the implied author is imaginatively constructed by the actual author, and may be constructed with different beliefs and convictions. Indeed, the implied author may be constructed to violate cultural boundaries in the production of 'the new.' For this reason, interpretation does not begin with an account of the author's prior behavior and beliefs, as if the text were simply a reproduction of these. It begins with an account of the culture to which the author wrote, along with the expectation of cultural newness as a reproduction of the author's subjectivity.

The second author, Adam Newton, begins with the assumption that the author is an irreducible subject who can never be wholly characterized by language or culture. Hence, he grasps the text as an encounter with otherness.¹⁹ Focusing on the fundamental irreducibility that characterizes this encounter, Newton eschews traditional communication models in order to privilege openness. While we recognize that the author is an irreducible subject who reproduces his or her subjectivity in the text, we also recognize that the author designed the text as a form of communication. The author designed this communication to be understandable to his or her audience. For this reason, our method begins with issues of narrative communication, addressing how such occurs, how subjective elements result in the breakdown of communication, and how such breakdowns may be approached.

Having completed a brief survey of our project, and where it is located in literary theory, it is helpful to lay out the general direction of this study. Chapter 1 focuses on the assumptions that underlie this method. The central assumptions are: the author and reader are subjects, writing and reading are intentional acts, and the relation between author and reader is ethical in nature. We developed these assumptions in an earlier book,²⁰ but here have adapted them specifically to our reading method.

Chapter 2 develops a communication model that is appropriate to narrative texts. Writing, as an intentional act, is about communication and being understandable. Authors perform this act in specific ways, creating the conditions under which communication occurs. Once readers recognize these conditions, they may enter the process in a way that maximizes communication and min-

18 On the definition and use of the 'implied author,' see Chapter 2, section Narrative Communication: Authors.

19 Newton, *Narrative Ethics*, Chapter 1.

20 Eric Douglass, *Reading the Bible Ethically: Recovering the Voice in the Text* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

imizes distortion. However, when authors reproduce their subjectivity in the text, they create something new with respect to culture, and this results in special communication problems. Fortunately, language contains resources for recognizing and—at least partially—understanding these radical bits of newness.

Chapter 3 focuses on how readers locate the story they are about to read. Narratives are constructed as mental simulations, using cognitive mechanisms that were developed to test the outcomes of one's choices. These simulations needed to seem real, so that their results would be taken with some seriousness. For the simulation to function as the author expected, the narrative's elements must be located in the culture for which the simulation was designed. Readers project an enculturated version of themselves into the simulation and then experience the consequences of the narrative's events.

Chapter 4 engages the issue of entering the storyworld. While modern narratives utilize a variety of mechanisms, ancient narratives almost always used the mechanism of identification with a character. Readers enter the storyworld as this character, taking in the events through this character's senses, thoughts, and emotions. In short, readers assign their 'way of being' in the storyworld to this character, so that they care about the events from this character's perspective. Indeed, the significance of the events is only made clear when this character's emotions, interests, and goals are brought to bear.

Chapter 5 takes account of the other characters in the narrative. Minor characters are introduced for a variety of functions. When used for conflict, these characters may be developed with considerable depth, so that their perspectives and emotions are taken into account. Nevertheless, readers still assume the position of the character of identification, and so evaluate the conflict from this specific position. This does not mean that the character of identification is evaluated as good, or even as right, within the narrative. Indeed, the disciples in the Gospel of Mark are often evaluated as faithless. This suggests the existence of a separate evaluative standard that stands over the entire narrative. The disciples may abandon Jesus from their interest in staying alive, but the evaluative standard grades this as 'lacking in faith.'

Chapter 6 focuses on how readers experience narratives. Narratives are not designed as lessons but as events. They function as mental simulations that readers both enter and experience. These experiences may seem quite real, to the point that readers become emotionally involved. This depth of identification creates vicarious experiences that change the reader in the storyworld, so that the reader becomes 'other' with respect to his or her actual-self. As such, simulations function as pathways to understanding otherness. From these experiences, readers construct story-meaning, which is an account of

the otherness experienced. In this chapter we also address the construction of event, and why readers from the same culture generally construct similar events from the text.

Chapter 7 begins with the issue of translation. Authors design their texts for specific cultures, and this includes any story-meaning derived from the story-world. To transplant story-meaning directly into another culture—and especially one with a different symbolic universe and social institutions—creates a distortion of the author's voice. This is remedied by translation practices, where the translator produces a story-meaning that functions in the same way for the modern culture as it did for the source culture. Once translation is accomplished, readers evaluate story-meaning, deciding if and how that meaning is valid for modern existence. Story-meaning is always someone else's meaning, and so must always be evaluated.

Chapter 8 applies this method to a number of New Testament examples. These are from the Gospel of Mark, as this is a focus of my research. Emphasizing a single text has the advantage of allowing my readers to see how the various parts of a text fit together. Nevertheless, we will consider other New Testament narratives throughout this study, especially emphasizing places where different or unusual narrative elements occur (e.g., the first-person narration of the Revelation of John).

Finally, we offer a note on the examples used in this study. Certain pericopae are repetitively engaged throughout these chapters. This is by design, so that readers can track the developments added by each step. By the concluding chapter, readers will have a full account for how we approach the Storm at Sea, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the Healing of the Epileptic Child, the Woman with a Hemorrhage, and Picking Grain on the Sabbath—each representing a different subgenre within narrative. Furthermore, certain types of stories have always presented difficulties for modern readers, and especially the nature miracles and exorcisms. Any interpretive method worthy of the name must be able to address these in a comprehensive way, so that stories about spirits and demons not only make sense, but have their existential relevance restored. Consequently, we will spend considerable time on the two stories of the Storm at Sea and the Healing of the Epileptic Child.

Reading under Ethics

The title to this chapter is deliberately provocative: reading should occur under ethical criteria. The history of interpretation is rife with such claims, beginning with Plato: “And shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales ... and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown up?”¹ This type of reading is widely and appropriately evaluated as puritanical. Book bans and burnings were often perpetrated by religious, civil, and political authorities who did not agree with the morality suggested by this or that text. The application of external criteria—moral or otherwise—has resulted in readers ‘cutting out’ whole sections of the text, as Jefferson did with the miracle stories of the New Testament, in the burning of whole editions, as occurred with Voltaire’s *Philosophical Dictionary*, and even in the murdering of authors, as happened to Olympe de Gouges.

However, ethical concerns are of several types, and this chapter is not about the moral actions of the characters or the ethical vision of the implied author. These are important and should be critiqued, as suggested by the growing field of ethical criticism. But this chapter focuses on ethical issues that are prior to any actual reading, to issues that govern how one begins and designs the act of reading itself. In short, this chapter engages the assumptions upon which reading is based, with the recognition that some of these are ethical in nature. To uncover these assumptions, this discussion begins with a characterization of writing and reading.

1 Writing as an Intentional Act

When authors write, they are not making random marks on a page. They write out of a desire to say or do something, and this designs the way in which their writing unfolds. Using the language of intentionality, writing is an intentional act, which means that it originates in a desire (an intentional state) to say something (the intentional object), and authors design their texts so that this

¹ Plato, *The Republic*, 11.377, in *Philosophies of Art and Beauty*, tr. Benjamin Jowett, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 9.

something is brought into language. Put another way, authors begin by imagining the something that they want to say or do, and then design the text so that, when they read their own text, they find this something. According to John Searle, some level of imagining or representing precedes the act itself: "That is, after all, why we have minds with mental states: to represent the world to ourselves; to represent how it is, how we would like it to be, how we fear it may turn out."² For Searle, the text is designed to fit the image that is in the author's mind.

Of course, authors never imagine all the details of their narrative. They begin with a general idea of what they want to say, and imagine a broad design that includes characters, plot, conflict, and genre. In this way, a narrative is purposeful, for the author coordinates its many elements to say this something. If an author decides to produce the meaning of 'God acts unfairly by human standards' (Parable of the Day Laborers, Mt. 20:1–16), he or she might begin with an appropriate genre (narrative, parable) and plot (a master who pays all workers the same, no matter how long they worked). He or she continues to create specifics of the plot, but always under the desire to show that God acts unfairly by human standards. The author designs the narrative to reproduce this meaning, and considers the act successful when he or she reads the text and creates this meaning.³

This summary of writing as an intention act reveals three central notions. First, a narrative is always about something, from the author's perspective. Authors may begin with a concrete meaning that they wish to embody, such as 'God acts unfairly,' but they may just as well begin with a highly abstract meaning, such as the desire to represent the workings of the unconscious mind (automatic writing) or to reveal the fragmentation of society (postmodern novel). Consider Richard Shusterman's example: "The individuating intention might in fact be the generation of textual polysemy and multiple interpretation whose specific varieties are not already foreseen or foredetermined,"⁴ or, following Kaye Mitchell, the author "may wish to pervert and obfuscate meaning, in which case his meaning just is this obfuscation."⁵

2 John Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 60.

3 Searle calls this the 'conditions of satisfaction,' and writes: "In each case the intentional state with a direction of fit has conditions of satisfaction, and we can say that the intentional state is a representation of its conditions of satisfaction" (John Searle, "Intentionality (1)," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Samuel Guttenplan [Malden: Blackwell, 1994], 382).

4 Richard Shusterman, "Interpreting with Pragmatist Intentions," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 170.

5 Kaye Mitchell, *Intention and Text: Toward an Intentionality of Literary Form* (London: Continuum, 2008), 30.

The point is that authors begin with an image in mind, and then shape the text to bring that image into language, so that narratives are oriented about unifying authorial intentions. In literary terms, the text is purposive (organic, connected, cohesive) and purposeful (has a use, is oriented toward a meaning).⁶ While ancient literature did not use this terminology, most Greco-Roman theorists were convinced of the importance of unity: "Unity is the prime virtue of plot-structure."⁷ Or, as Horace writes, "Let it be simple and unified ... cling to one point ... cohesion with the plot."⁸

Second, authors test their intentional acts to see if they successfully conveyed their meaning. This involves reading their own texts as naïve readers, as if they did not know the plot. When they reproduce the meanings and effects that they attempted to instantiate in the text, then the conditions of fulfillment are met, almost as if this something is in the text. On the other hand, the test might reveal sections that are ambiguous or even suggest a different meaning. At such junctures, the author must decide whether to reinforce the original meanings by adding text to reduce the ambiguity, or shift to a different meaning by adding text to reinforce a new orientation. But in both cases, the text is still designed by the author's desire to say or do something, and so is intentional in nature.

Third, authors perform this 'test reading' from the position of the intended audience.⁹ The intended audience is the group for whom the author designed the language of the text. As James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz note, it is "impossible to make meaningful rhetorical choices without some sense of whom you are addressing."¹⁰ Authors read from this position to ensure that their meaning is both recoverable and understandable by the intended audience. At times, the intended audience may be the author himself or herself,

6 This distinction is Kantian in origin; cf. Denis Dutton, "Kant and the Conditions of Artistic Beauty," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 34, no. 3 (July 1994): 226–241.

7 Stephen Halliwell, "Aristotle's Poetics," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1: Classical Criticism, ed. George Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 158.

8 Horace, "Ars Poetica," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 124, 125, 128. Cf. Longinus: "Organize them as a unity ... making a unity of them ... brings everything together" ("On Sublimity," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch [New York: W.W. Norton, 2001], 141).

9 Bev Braune addresses this: "The solution to the 'problem of reading' begins with the first reader—the composer of the work, in this case, the poet—not with various possible readers" ("Who is The Reader? And How Many of Us Are There?" *Antipodes* 19, no. 2 [Dec. 2005], 216).

10 James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz, "Reception and the Reader," in *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 140.

as in a diary. In these cases, authors may employ private language elements which only they understand. But when authors publish their work, they reveal yet another intention, namely, the desire for their text to be understandable by some audience. The meaning of 'publishing behavior,' then, is to be understandable, and to this end authors employ the public language conventions of their intended audience.¹¹ Authors test this intention by reading with the language conventions of that audience, and the conditions for understanding are met when they create the expected meaning and effects.

We should pause to note that the physical forms of publishing behavior may vary from culture to culture, but the author's disposition does not. Once the author decides that the text is for a broader audience, he or she shifts to a deliberate use of public language under the desire to be understandable.¹² Henceforth, we will use 'publishing behavior' to indicate the author's shift in language, from more private uses to broader public forms, for the purpose of being understandable by a larger audience. This means that even a text designed for public reading, such as New Testament literature, falls under the strictures of publishing behavior.

We may summarize by saying that authors engage in writing behavior and publishing behavior, that both are intentional acts, and that the meaning of each act is different. Writing behavior stems from *the desire to say or do something*, and is carried out by producing a purposeful and purposive design that leads to story-meaning. Publishing behavior stems from *the desire to be understandable* and is carried out by selecting the design of a particular language and reproducing that language's design in the text.

This notion, of being understandable, requires a clear grasp of the relationships between language, objects, and culture.¹³ Words are not directly attached to physical objects. If they were, then a word would invariantly point to the

11 Language is not wholly reducible to convention, but to suggest that language is nonconventional, as in David Davidson's "passing theory" ("James Joyce and Humpty Dumpty," in *Truth, Language, and History* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 143–158) is to miss the stage setting and formal structures that support the single nonconventional use (malapropism, neologism). On language as conventional, cf. John Searle, "Literary Theory and Its Discontents," *New Literary History* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 637–668; and David Lewis, "Languages and Language," in *The Philosophy of Language* 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 562–580.

12 Specifically, the author uses the language conventions of the intended audience, which may be a subset of the general culture, such as those using a 'code' language (as in Revelation).

13 We will define 'culture' in Chapter 3, but may summarize by saying that culture attaches symbolic meaning to practices and objects.

same object, and the word ‘blockhead’ would still indicate the wood blocks used to shape wigs.¹⁴ Words are also not attached to ideal objects that never change, as in Classical Greek thought.¹⁵ If this were the case, then the noun ‘bribe’ would still indicate alms that one gives to a beggar.¹⁶ Furthermore, words do not have an internal fund of meaning that imposes itself on each hearer. If this were the case, then words would only have a single meaning and this meaning would never change. This is even the case for onomatopoeic words, which may resemble their objects at the level of sound, but still lack an inner meaning that fixes this relation.

Rather, word usage (the signified) is arbitrarily attached to a word (the signifier), and this usage is taught to a child by his or her parents as a reproduction of the parents’ culture. While some aspects of language do appear to be hard-wired into humans, resulting in language universals,¹⁷ it is just as clear that most aspects are locally formed and reflect the specific moment of a culture. Here a word’s usage is rooted in, or indexed to, a culture’s worldview, and can only be understood with this background in place.¹⁸

For example, sailors from the first and twenty-first centuries have a common grasp of wind, as that which fills the sails and so moves the ship forward. But at the deeper level of worldview, the modern person understands wind as caused by physical forces (e.g., low pressure systems) which are impersonal and neutral, while the first-century sailor grasps it as controlled by spiritual forces which are personal and may be trying to kill him or her. Because of these deep differences, each group responds to winds differently. The first-century person turns to amulets, spells, and sacrifices, while the modern person does not.

The point is that the desire to be understandable means being understandable by an audience in culture. Authors envision this audience, at least implicitly, prior to picking up pen and paper. Peter Rabinowitz calls this the “authorial audience,” which is the author’s image of the intended audience—something

14 Robert Hendrickson, *The Facts on File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*, rev. and exp. (New York: Checkmark Books, 2000), 80.

15 Here nouns “originated with a divine name-giver, exist by nature (*phusis*), and reveal a necessary relationship between a sign and a signified” (George Kennedy, “Language and Meaning in Archaic and Classical Greece,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Classical Criticism*, vol. 1, ed. George Kennedy [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 86; author’s parenthesis). This was one of several ancient positions.

16 Hendrickson, *The Facts on File Encyclopedia*, 100.

17 Cf. Kirsten Malmkjær, “Language Universals,” in *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*, ed. Kirsten Malmkjær (London: Routledge, 1991), 277–284.

18 ‘Worldview’ is a collection of the basic assumptions of a culture, as an embodiment of their symbolic universe and cognitive (relational) maps; see Chapter 3.

that only exists in the author's mind.¹⁹ Of course, the author's image of an audience is never fully accurate, as no culture is fully homogenized. Indeed, the mechanisms for language acquisition include one's subjective experience of the world, so that language itself is never identical from person to person.²⁰ This means that authors write to an audience in their mind (authorial audience) which only bears a near resemblance to their actual audience (intended audience). When authors read their own texts, they do so from the position of their authorial audience, under the assumption that their authorial audience is nearly identical to the intended audience. But the distinction between the two, which is rooted in issues of language competency and language indeterminacy, means that 'writer meaning' can never be identical with 'reader meaning.'²¹

From this discussion, it is clear that being understandable has two central prerequisites. The first is that authors have an accurate grasp of the intended audience's culture, broadly understood to include their language, worldview, and institutions. Authors write with this audience in mind, reproducing this audience's culture in the text, so that readers from the intended audience *recognize their own language, worldview, and institutions as they are reading*.

The second is that authors choose to follow the culture of the intended audience, employing its linguistic, literary, and social institutions in a conventional way. There are no rules of writing that require authors to do this. Indeed, authors may introduce new elements—elements that are not part of that culture—into their texts as part of their creative writing experiment. But if authors desire to be understandable, then the majority of these elements must come from the culture of the intended audience. A malapropism represents a standard type of violation in language, and the occasional malapropism is delightful. But if every other word is a malapropism, then the text is no longer understandable. These two assumptions, that the author both knows

19 Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 21.

20 Children initially assimilate language by attaching their parents' words to their own subjective experiences of the world, so that word usage always retains a subjective (private) residue. Edward Craig addresses the possibility of "epistemically private items," and suggests that "there are no conclusive reasons" for banning them ("Meaning and Privacy," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Bob Hale and Crispin Wright [Malden: Blackwell, 1997], 136). Cf. David Chalmers' notions on "subjective experience" ("The Hard Problem of Consciousness," in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, ed. Max Velmans and Susan Schneider [Malden: Blackwell, 2007], 225–235).

21 'Language competency' is Johnathan Culler's term, while 'indeterminacy of language' is Willard Quine's.

and chooses to use the culture of the intended audience, form the basis of understandability from the author's side, and will have consequences for the reader's side, as we will see below.

Centrally, this discussion suggests that understandability *is not tied to the author's biography, private intentions, or inner beliefs*, as if these were the keys to unlocking the text's meanings. If these were the keys, then authors would require readers to know their biography, intentions, and private beliefs prior to reading their texts. Indeed, if these were the keys, then authors could only write in accordance with their existing beliefs, so that authors who accept physical causation could never write in the genre of fantasy. Instead, authors produce a version of themselves for writing, called an implied author, and this version may be created with different beliefs than the actual author. As Booth notes: "Everyone knows that authors must take on roles, that they need not be 'sincerely' wedded to particular characteristics in order to portray them sympathetically."²²

Hence, using an author's biographical data or general beliefs to control reading may well result in a manipulation of the author's voice.²³ Indeed, this path turns the text into an allegory of the author's life. Biography and beliefs may be helpful in resolving textual ambiguity or in texturing meanings, but are not appropriate as a guide to reading.²⁴ Readers may have access to Paul's biography in Acts, but using this to create, determine, or fix the meaning of Paul's letters is deeply problematic. Readers begin with the language of his text, and only turn to biography to clarify meanings, and even this is only provisional.

Now, while understandability is based on using language conventionally, authors may not feel bound by the culture of the intended audience. If they

22 Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 254.

23 Aristotle's school (peripatetics) began using authorial biography to understand texts: "A distinguishing characteristic ... was its interest in biographical information about poets ... to explain passages in their works" (George Kennedy, "Hellenistic Literary and Philosophical Scholarship," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1: Classical Criticism, ed. George Kennedy [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 205). Similarly with Romantic interpretation, which assumed that texts were a sincere manifestation of the author's vision, as rooted in the author's life history. Modern examples of using biography include Hirsch's intentionalism and Alexander Nehamas' hypothetical intentionalism, which attempt to construct the author's psychology as a 'reading control.' These stances are plagued by the incapacity to reliably connect life events to the author's psychology (requires a rejection of human subjectivity), and the author's psychology directly to the author's writing (requires a rejection of the implied author).

24 For a comprehensive discussion on the problems and use of authorial materials, cf. Eric Douglass, *Reading the Bible Ethically: Recovering the Voice in the Text* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), Chapter 7.

were bound by their culture, then texts would only be a reproduction of existing culture—an issue to which we will turn below. Authors may choose to cross cultural boundaries in creating new meanings, forms, and uses of language (e.g., neologism, malapropism, new metaphor, new type of narration). However, if they desire to be understandable, they must also provide supplementary materials to make these clear.

For example, when Jesus performs his first exorcism in the Gospel of Mark (1:23–27), he does so without accessing any powerful objects (amulets, roots, prayers, or sacrifices). This creates a disjunction for first-century readers, who know that humans cannot order spirits on their own, as they lack the authority (*exousia*) to do so.²⁵ Hence, the author provides clues to the resolution of this disjunction, by having the spirit address Jesus' authority: "Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God," as well as having the crowd embody the reader's confusion over this issue: "They were all amazed, and kept asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.'"²⁶ These clues tell the reader that Jesus is not acting as a charlatan, as his behavior might suggest, but has real authority over the spirit, no matter how impossible this might seem.

This example reveals that authors have the capacity to create newness, suggesting that authors are not simply reproducing their culture in the text, but are using their subjectivity in the creation of newness. Here we come to the issue of authorial causation, for the encoding of subjective elements can only occur if the author—and not culture—is the cause of the text. Let us begin with the issue of authorial causation, and then turn to how authors reproduce their subjectivity in the text.

As already noted, authors begin by imagining what they want to say or do prior to picking up pen and paper, and then reproduce this in their writing. They employ a 'narrative argument,' which uses conflicting themes and evaluative comments to guide the reader to certain experiential truths. In creating this argument, authors shape the characters, plot, conflict, and evaluative comments so that—in their minds—the text reproduces these experiential truths.

25 Humans are lower on the scale of 'cosmic hierarchy' than angels or demons. Cf. Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992), 181; and Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 104–105.

26 Except where indicated, all biblical citations are from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, Division of Christian Education of the National Councils of the Churches of Christ, 1989.

As Searle writes: “My intention will only be fully carried out if the world changes so as to match the content of the intention.”²⁷ Searle calls this intentional causation, where “there is an internal connection between the cause and the effect, because the cause is a representation of the very state of affairs that it causes.”²⁸

Some scholars reject intentional causation, instead suggesting that authors only repackage their culture. Indeed, Barthes states that authors “can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original,” so that the text is little more than “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.”²⁹ In this system, authors occupy a position through which culture acts, as if authors were a mask that culture wears. As Maynard notes: “New Historicism and American Cultural Studies ... spin a web of cultural determinism to replace author determination.”³⁰ Similarly Salkeld writes:

The anti-humanist drift of much theory associated with Lacan, Althusser and Foucault ... has tended to write off the possibility of human agency, or at least circumscribe it heavily amid wider structures of language, ideology and discourse.³¹

This notion, of cultural determinism, may be added to a long list of materialist-based determinisms, including strong versions of behaviorism (e.g., Skinner), linguistic determinism (e.g., the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis), psychic determinism (e.g., Freud), economic determinism (e.g., Marx), and biological determinism (e.g., Wilson). If these flavors of determinism—some of which are

27 Searle, “Intentionality,” 384. Cf. Duncan Salkeld who argues for agency in meaning based on “the fact that we do not have agent-less verbs,” so that subjectivity “will always be presupposed as notional starting points” (“Shakespeare and ‘the I-word,’” *Style* 44, no. 3 [Fall 2010]: 330).

28 Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Science*, 60–61. This is a rejection of David Hume’s theory of causation, which allows effects to be studied independently of causes. For Searle, effects are explained on the basis of causes.

29 Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1468.

30 John Maynard, *Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009), 74.

31 Duncan Salkeld, “New Historicism,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 69. Note that Foucault moved away from this position with his ‘technologies of the self’; cf. Dianne Skinner, “Foucault, Subjectivity and Ethics: Toward a Self-forming Subject,” *Organization* 20, no. 6 (November 2013): 907, accessed May 6, 2014, doi:10.1177/1350508412460419.

contradictory—were the whole story of selfhood, then an author would be little more than a cipher for culture, an allegory of culture writ large. The notion of intentional causation would be vacuous.

The question is whether these determinisms form a complete or even an adequate description of humans. Let us explore an example from Benjamin Whorf, which he used to support the notion of linguistic determinism. He recounts a story from his days as an insurance adjustor, where a worker was told that a gas drum was empty. According to Whorf, the worker understood ‘empty’ with the categories of “null and void, negative, inert.”³² Thus he cut into the drum with a torch, only to find that the gas fumes ignited and exploded. Whorf rightly concluded that the worker’s grasp of language determined the worker’s reality, even to the point that he acted upon that reality. However, it is just as critical to note that the drum exploded, as if reality were not controlled by the worker’s beliefs and language, but pushed back against them. This suggests that reality is not fully determined by a person’s beliefs, psychology, language, or genetics. In short, the strong forms of determinism are incomplete descriptions of human experience.

Furthermore, it is likely that this worker never used ‘empty’ in the same sense again, for his experience contradicted the category of ‘inert.’ Henceforth, he might write that an empty gas drum is at risk for blowing up, as though his experiences were now reshaping his language. This suggests that *even as language shapes human experience, human experience shapes language*, so that the two are in a dialectical relation. As Johnstone writes: “The consensus among discourse analysts is that discourse is both shaped by and helps to shape the human lifeworld.”³³ But even more critically, this shaping of language is subjective in nature, that is, it is rooted in one’s experience of the world. Since this world is not fully determined by language or culture, the experience is at least partially shaped by a reality outside of both.³⁴

Now, when this worker writes: ‘An empty gas drum is at risk for blowing up,’ he is violating the existing usage of ‘empty.’ Indeed, he is creating a subjective addition to language. This is also the case in our earlier example of authority,

32 Benjamin Whorf, “The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language,” in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986), 710. On the varieties of linguistic determinism, see John Lucy, “Linguistic Relativity,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26 (1997): 291–312.

33 Barbara Johnstone, *Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 33.

34 Here we are rejecting the notion of a thoroughgoing social construction of reality, and positing a more modest ‘human construction of social reality.’ This stands in dialectical relation to one’s experience of the world, as a Hegelian thesis and antithesis, so that human reality can only be described as a synthesis of the two.

where the author of Mark brought something new into language as a breach of existing culture. In short, while thinking occurs in cultural forms and categories, the content can still have subjective elements. This is due to the human capacity to cross cultural boundaries and conventional usage by engaging in divergent, lateral, associative, irrational, and non-linear types of thinking.

Consider the creation of a malapropism, which involves a subjective association in a conventional form. We will use an example from Shakespeare, where an official has grown weary of a criminal's excuses, and finally shouts: "Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this."³⁵ When Shakespeare was forming this sentence, he recognized that the conventional manner of speaking about crimes required the word 'condemnation' here—readers would expect this. He then made a subjective association between the words 'condemnation' and 'redemption,' not on the basis of usage, but on the basis of a shared phoneme. This type of association between these two words may never have occurred in the history of language, but was a manifestation of Shakespeare's subjectivity. Indeed, Davidson calls a malapropism "sheer invention."³⁶ Then, because of the conventional nature of the form, Shakespeare expected readers to apply the meaning of condemnation to this passage, while ignoring and laughing at the official's use of redemption. In short, for a malapropism to work, the author has to place a subjective association in a conventional expectation and form.

This leads us to the conclusion that humans are subjects, in that they are not fully controlled or determined by their culture, but have the capacity to cross such boundaries in the creation of the new. The self represents a partial synthesis, or an entanglement, of multiple influences: subjective experience of the world, language, psychology, biochemistry, and genetics.³⁷ But central to our discussion is the subjective element, for it suggests that humans are capable of crossing culture's horizons. Indeed, Levinas suggests that humans are never reducible to the sameness of culture or the themes of language, but can only be characterized as being 'more than.'³⁸ Marshall summarizes our concerns:

35 William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act IV, scene 2.

36 Davidson, "James Joyce and Humpty Dumpty," 143.

37 This suggests another dialectical relationship, where human behavior can only be described as a synthesis of human subjectivity and biological determinism.

38 Emmanuel Levinas writes: "The idea of the infinite ... is a thought which, in its phenomenology, does not allow itself to be reduced, without remainder, to the act of consciousness of a subject, to pure thematizing intentionality" ("Transcendence and Intelligibility," in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996], 155–157). Cf. M.M. Bakhtin, where heteroglossia allow that author to say: "I am me' in someone

To make such assertions as are common in contemporary criticism—language speaks us, culture creates us, history shapes us, gender determines us, or to make Marx's claim that the material and political forms of social existence determine consciousness—asserts what is only half true. We are never so situated that we are fully formed and forever fixed. We are not selves just passively molded or shaped by cookie-cutter forces of language or history.³⁹

Hence, if humans are subjects who are capable of crossing culture's boundaries, and if they are capable of reproducing this newness in their texts, then texts are not simply a reproduction of culture. A more complete characterization is that texts are a reproduction of the author's culture and subjectivity. To the degree that an author's subjectivity is reproduced, the text is not simply culture speaking through the author, but is the unique voice of the author. Historical examples of authorial subjectivity are easy to find, and include the creation of new forms (e.g., objective narration, stream of consciousness narration), new uses of language (e.g., malapropisms, idiosyncratic uses, neologisms), and new meanings (e.g., new metaphors, lateral thinking, paradigm shifts). The first time any of these appeared, they represented a crossing of cultural boundaries.

By way of summary, authors begin with the desire to say and do something. They attempt to reproduce this something by engaging in writing behavior. Authors may also have the desire for other people to understand their writing. This results in publishing behavior, where authors encode their meaning in such a way that the conditions for communication are met. Central to these conditions is that the author is using the language conventions and worldview of the intended audience. Authors may still bring newness into language, as a manifestation of their subjectivity, but do so in specific ways that foster understandability, such as encoding it in a standard form or adding extra material as commentary. Authors view the text as a reproduction of their meanings and so as their voice in the world. Indeed, when a reader mischaracterizes or mistranslates their work, they often send corrections, and even marshal textual evidence to show how the reader ignored or missed specific elements.⁴⁰

else's language, and in my own language, 'I am other'" ("Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, transl. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), Kindle edition, Kindle locations 4416–4417).

39 Marshall Gregory, "Ethical Criticism: What It Is and Why It Matters," *Style* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 194, accessed Aug. 8, 2013, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

40 Peter Zima notes that "whenever the deconstructionist protests (as Derrida very often does) that he has been misunderstood or misinterpreted, whenever he relies on an English

2 Reading as an Intentional Act

Just as writing is an intentional act, so is reading.⁴¹ Reading begins with a desire for something, and readers then adopt a method that is designed to deliver that something from the text.⁴² If readers desire to recover the author's meaning, they will apply a method that engages the text without resistance. If readers desire to find history, they will apply a historical method and find what that method was designed to deliver. If they desire to recognize androcentric world-views, they will employ a feminist method. As Fish writes: "I did what critics always do: I 'saw' what my interpretive principles permitted or directed me to see, and then I turned around and attributed what I had 'seen' to a text and an intention."⁴³

This suggests that reading is an instrumental task, where readers create what they initially desire. However, this characterization is incomplete for two reasons. First, readers may employ a method that is designed to meet different desires or achieve different goals. Methods are based on the assumptions of their creators, and they reproduce these assumptions in every application to the text. As impersonal structures, they have no regard for the readers' desires. For this reason, readers must delve into the assumptions upon which their method is based and decide if these are appropriate to their desire and grasp of the world. Second, the text's structure may resist the coercive moves of desire and method. Methods are never fully controlling. If they were, then a method

translation of one of his works, he presupposes a definable meaning" (*The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory* [London: The Athlone Press, 1999], 155, author's parenthesis; see 173).

41 Some have questioned the notion of intentionality in reading, using the example of automatic reading. Cf. David Schalkwyk: "If it is possible for reading to be involuntary, then, even if it were to happen only once, any account of intentionality needs to account for this as an essential possibility" ("Giving Intention its Due?" *Style* 44, no. 3 [Fall 2010]: 31). Our response is that reading did not begin as an involuntary act, but as an intentional act, where children learned to identify the conventional shapes of an alphabet and words. Only with repetition do these 'seem' automatic, though the original intentional state remains. This would be John Searle's "intention in action" (*Minds, Brains, and Science* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984], 65).

42 Maynard writes that "individuals find different kinds of reading and different styles of reading, following their interest and desires ... the final authority is the individual reader who reads for her own interests and needs" (*Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers*, 364). While we place 'desire' in the language of intentional acts, it functions similarly to Heidegger's notion of 'pre-understanding.'

43 Stanley Fish, "Interpreting the Variorum," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 176.

would shape all materials to fit that method's design, resulting in a univocal text without disjunctions. We will turn to both of these issues in greater depth below.

Next, just as authors are subjects, meaning that they have the capacity to cross cultural boundaries in the creation of the new, so readers are subjects in their capacity to cross cultural boundaries in their recognition of the new. If readers were not subjects, they could only reproduce their existing culture out of the text. This would be tantamount to stating that humans are incapable of genuine learning, but only repackage what they already know. While repackaging is typical of Platonic explanations, which understood learning as remembering (anamnesis), our approach involves the subjective capacity to assimilate that which is new, foreign, and other, and so necessarily results in an expansion of one's horizons.

Finally, our model readers begin with the desire to recover the voice of the author. The phrase, 'the voice of the author,' means different things from the perspectives of the author and reader. From the author's side, it suggests that the author has created the text as an intentional act, and so embodied his or her thinking in cultural forms.⁴⁴ But readers do not have access to that author's thinking or intentions, as these are private objects in the author's mind. Rather, readers begin with a text, and the recognition that the author engaged in the intentional acts of writing and publishing.⁴⁵ Hence, readers who desire to access the voice of the author begin with writing and publishing behavior, as they suggest the author's guidelines toward that goal.

These intentional acts provide readers with three general guidelines. First, readers know, or at least expect, that the text is about something, and so is purposive and purposeful. This means that the text's elements are organized in a larger design, so that the various parts cohere.⁴⁶ Readers who begin with

44 There is an argument over whether thinking only occurs in cultural forms (so that culture controls thinking), or may precede cultural assimilation (so allowing for thinking to shape culture). While beyond the scope of this text, it is worth noting that if thought does require language, then pre-linguistic infants are incapable of thinking.

45 Writing and reading are different kinds of intentional acts. In writing, authors begin with meaning, and attempt to shape the text to fit what is in their mind (this is Searle's 'world to mind' direction of fit). But readers do the opposite: they begin with the text and attempt to create meaning (Searle's 'mind to world' direction of fit).

46 Henry Staten writes: "Poems are wholes because, at the most general level, the intention 'I will write a poem' ... is intrinsically structured by the practice-guiding aim at wholeness" ("Art as Techne, or, The Intentional Fallacy and the Unfinished Project of Formalism," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Gary Hagberg and Walter Jost [Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2010], Kindle edition, Kindle locations 7515–7516). Staten

the desire for communication use this as a guideline, and coordinate the text's elements into higher levels of organization. On the other hand, communication breaks down when readers emphasize fragmentation, read against the text (resistant readings), or ignore sections of the text (Jefferson Bible).

Second, these intentional acts suggest that texts function to say and do something, so that readers expect both meanings and effects. Interpretive moves that only acknowledge the saying component (e.g., lessons) or the doing component (e.g., forms) change the function of the text, and so disrupt genuine communication. Third, these acts, and especially publishing behavior, suggest that texts were designed for a particular culture, so that communication only occurs when this culture is employed. Interpretive moves that refuse to acknowledge the culture of origin (some forms of literalism, reader-response, and deconstruction) change the meaning of the text, and so disrupt communication.

If readers desire communication, they begin with these suggestions as guidelines to the initial reading (second readings originate in different desires, and so use different guidelines). These represent the ways in which the author expected and designed for the text to be read. Hence, the voice of the author, from the reader's perspective, is the meaning recovered when the reader follows these guidelines. The fact that these allow for a narrow collection of meanings, instead of a single meaning, is no objection: any meaning formed under these conditions is the voice of the author, for the reader has read the text as the author designed for the text to be read. On the other hand, a manipulation of the author's voice occurs when one flouts these guidelines by employing the worldview of a different culture (as in our example of wind) or reading with resistance to the literary form (e.g., reading a first-century parable as a lesson).

At this point, some schools raise the objection that literary texts are not about communication. For example, it is common to hear that aesthetic language is not about information or concepts, but aesthetic pleasure, so that a distinction exists between ordinary language and aesthetic language.⁴⁷ This path begins with Kant's notion of free beauty, where beauty is disconnected from purposes and concepts, and so is not about the transmission of information. He writes: "Flowers, free designs, lines aimlessly intertwined in each other under the name of foliage, signify nothing, do not depend on any determi-

roots wholeness in formalism and social practice, while I root it in the notion of intentional acts, and recognize that such acts employ forms and practices.

47 On the notion of two languages, cf. Noël Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation," in *Intention & Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 105–107.

nate concept, and yet please.”⁴⁸ This was picked up by a number of interpretive schools that “insist on the autonomy of art, rejecting all attempts to reduce it to a conceptual message pointing toward the real world.”⁴⁹ So Monroe Beardsley, a New Critic, writes that the “*general and essential* task of the literary interpreter cannot be the discovery of authorial meaning.”⁵⁰

Most attempts to distinguish aesthetic (literary) language from ordinary language focus on the formal aspects, stating that literary language specially relies on genre, figures of speech, implicit meaning, or unique forms. However, examples of almost all these may be found in ordinary language, and their absence may be found in some examples of poetry (e.g., *The Red Wheelbarrow*, by William Carlos Williams). Our conclusion is that of Lamarque and Olsen: “Formal properties, including those listed, occur in all kinds of texts to different degrees, so they do not themselves mark off what is of value in literature.”⁵¹

Other attempts at distinction rely on the function of aesthetic language, that it is pretend and not serious, or that its speech acts are defective. But these fail to understand how storyworlds function: they are mental simulations, and within the simulation the speech acts function quite normally and can be both emotional and serious (we will turn to ‘mental simulations’ in Chapter 3). In the end, no clear distinctions can be made between literary and ordinary language, so that our conclusion is that of Noël Carroll: “Our own position has been that these considerations do not require us in general to treat literature differently from ordinary discourse, except perhaps in certain limited instances.”⁵² Thus, our claims about the intentional acts of writing and publishing remain, as do the guidelines based upon them.

3 The Author’s Voice and the Reader’s Ethics

How does one treat a voice in the world, whether an actual voice in conversation or a constructed voice from a narrative? Readers have power over the text and can do with it as they like. There are no laws controlling this relation. Read-

48 Cited in Paul Guyer, “The Origins of Modern Aesthetics: 1711–35,” in *The Blackwell Guide to the Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 39.

49 Zima, *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory*, 5.

50 Monroe Beardsley, “The Authority of the Text,” in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 34; author’s italics.

51 Peter Lamarque and Stein Olsen, “Literary Practice,” in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 207.

52 Carroll, “Art, Intention, and Conversation,” 113. For a complete discussion of this topic, cf. Douglass, *Reading the Bible Ethically*, 123–134.

ers select a reading method based on their own interests and desires, so that the author's voice can only emerge if readers so choose. Readers who allow the author's voice to emerge have chosen the path that allows the least powerful person in this relation, by virtue of absence, to have a voice. This is often called 'showing respect to the text,' but as the text is an expression of the author, it is actually showing respect to the author.⁵³ Interpretive schools often circumvent this issue by assuming that the author is disconnected from his or her text, and so does not need to be taken into consideration. The author's desire to say or do something is considered irrelevant.

This notion—called textual autonomy—has taken several forms in literary criticism. The first form is tied to the Kantian notion of free beauty, where the text is viewed as an aesthetic object. In this form, the text can be studied on its own, without appeals to an author's intentions, purposes, history, or culture.⁵⁴ It is an autonomous object, so that readers can neglect "the questions *why* it was written in a particular social set-up and *what* political aims or interest it articulates."⁵⁵ Indeed, the text is not considered purposeful, as that would reduce the text to concepts and interests. Instead, the text remains a timeless purposive unit that is recognized as beautiful by all.

However, our notion of 'writing as an intentional act' specifically refutes textual autonomy: the text is not just purposive, but purposeful. Writing behavior means that the author is attempting to say and do something, so that from the author's perspective, concepts and purposes—including social, political and religious interests—are in the text. Furthermore, publishing behavior grounds the text in the culture of the intended audience, so that these concepts and effects are not understood universally, but locally. Certain forms may be uni-

53 Esp. see James Kincaid and James Phelan, "What Do We Owe Texts: Respect, Irreverence or Nothing at All," *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1999): 758–783.

54 This represents a synthesis of Kant's separation of beauty from information, and Hume's separation of causes from effects. Cf. Zima, *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory*, 3–5, and Colin Lyas, "Wittgensteinian Intentions," in *Intention & Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 138–140. While Kant did not separate a text from the author, New Criticism made this move in its reaction to Romanticism, so that the text was now viewed as an autonomous object that could be studied without reference to its author. Kevin Vanhoozer summarizes: "Beginning with New Criticism in the 1940s and continuing through structuralism in the 1960s, literary critics have attempted to find a principle for determinate meaning based on the text alone, considered as an entity autonomous from its author" ("The Reader in New Testament Interpretation," in *Hearing The New Testament*, ed. Joel Green [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 304). Textual autonomy is also typical of structuralism and early narrative criticism.

55 Zima, *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory*, 24.

versal (narrative universals), but this must be shown via cross-cultural studies and not simply assumed.⁵⁶ Indeed, a text is not even free of the reader's interests, since reading begins with a desire for something, so that the text is never grasped as a neutral, non-contextualized, autonomous object 'out there' for appreciation.

Another form of textual autonomy suggests that the text originated in a culture, but that it takes on a life of its own as soon as it is appropriated by another culture.⁵⁷ In this way the text is no longer tethered to the circumstances of its origin, and so can be meaningful in other circumstances. However, texts do not 'take on' a life of their own, as if they were active agents. Changes occur when readers apply different contexts, interests, and methods, and this even occurs within the culture of origin. Texts only become separated from their original culture because readers—usually implicitly—choose to do so. Indeed, some texts are not permitted to take on a life of their own, as in legal wills which are tied to their context of origin regardless of when they are activated.

A final form of autonomy suggests that the text originates in culture, but that the author is also a product of culture, so that the author is irrelevant.⁵⁸ In this view, the text is only a reproduction of ideology, economics, deep structures, codes, psychological drives, anthropologic models, and the like. As one author summarizes: "In effect, the work of art is credited with no meaning or worth independent of its ideological position."⁵⁹ In the previous section, we examined the weakness of this position by arguing that texts are not wholly characterized by any form of determinism. The text is imagined and constructed by an author via intentional causation, so that the selection and arrangement of cultural elements is itself a manifestation of that person's subjectivity.

56 For example, Patrick Hogan, "Narrative Universals, Heroic Tragi-comedy, and Shakespeare's Political Ambivalence," *College Literature* 33 (Winter 2006): 34–66.

57 William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley (New Criticism) state that the poem "is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it" ("The Intentional Fallacy," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch [New York: W.W. Norton, 2001], 1376). Cf. Paul Ricoeur's notion of 'distanciation' (*Interpretation Theory* [Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976], 25, 29).

58 In its most radical form, this is Barthe's 'Death of the Author' school, but similar moves are made in the deterministic forms of New Historicism, Marxism, sociology, and anthropology.

59 Andrew Edgar, "Adorno and the Early Frankfurt School," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 111.

In the end, the author is never present in the text, but instead of using the metaphors of authorial absence and textual autonomy, we turn to the metaphor of authorial reproduction. The former terms suggest that the author is not responsible for the meaning of the text. An author could engage in racist and androcentric writing, and then defend the text by stating that it is not about concepts and purposes, or that it is only culture talking through them. In short, it is to state that authors have no voice in the world. Furthermore, authorial absence and textual autonomy allow readers to treat the text as an object, and so to use it for their own ends. These terms even allow readers to bring the text “into contradiction with itself, opening its intended meaning ... onto an alterity which goes against what the text wants to say or mean.”⁶⁰

Conversely, the metaphor of reproduction suggests that the author is, at least partially, the cause of the text. Here writing is a reproduction of the author's culture and subjectivity, where the author shapes the text to fit what is in his or her mind. In this way, the author is still ethically responsible for his or her text, even though the path of connections moves through the implied author. Others have also employed this notion of authorial reproduction. Hirsch states that texts are “an extension and expression of men in the social domain,” and so should be treated as “ends in themselves,”⁶¹ while Betti considered texts as “manifestations of spirit, and manifestations of spirit, unlike things, are to be respected and not merely used.”⁶² Bakhtin writes similarly: “Beginning with any text ... we always arrive, in the final analysis, at the human voice, which is to say we come up against the human being.”⁶³ Allen, using the philosophy of Levinas, makes the point explicit:

To put this simply, resurrection happens through our reading the ‘I’ of Emerson's text. The reader is ‘voicing’ Emerson's ‘I,’ his subjectivity—his position (and existence) as a subject. In this kind of encounter, the reader, literally, experiences the text-as-representation-of-its-writer.⁶⁴

60 Simon Critchley and Timothy Mooney, “Deconstruction and Derrida,” in *Continental Philosophy in the 20th Century*, ed. Richard Kearney, Routledge History of Philosophy, vol. 8 (London: Routledge, 1994), 446.

61 E.D. Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 90.

62 Jeff Mitscherling, Tanya Ditommaso, and Aref Nayed, *The Author's Intention* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004), 73.

63 Bakhtin, “The Dialogic Imagination,” Kindle locations 3610–3612.

64 Sarah Allen, “Reading the Other: Ethics of Encounter,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 40, no. 7 (2008): 893, accessed June 10, 2015, doi: 10.1111/j.1469-5812.2008.00468.x, author's parenthesis. Note that Allen is addressing the personal essay.

In our terminology, the text is the author's voice in the world. So, back to our opening question, how does one treat a human voice, even if it is in the form of a written text? We begin by noting that the human voice is not like other objects in the world. Chess pieces may resemble the human form, but they lack will and choice, they cannot represent concepts to themselves, and they are incapable of intentionality.⁶⁵ When humans play chess, they may follow the rules as if they had no choice, but they formulate strategies and care about winning as if they did. In the social realm, humans may follow their instincts, programs, culture, and biology as if they had no choice, but they are also capable of transcending and even violating all of these in the creation of the new.

Furthermore, humans are not only different from other objects, but are also different from 'me.' I cannot fully reduce the human who stands before me to my way of living, as if he or she were a projection of me. They may be characterized as 'like me,' in that they have the same senses, emotions, motor cortex, and social institutions, but also as irreducibly other in their capacity to transcend my themes, categories, horizons, and goals. Again, humans are subjects.

Ethical principles regulate how humans encounter and treat each other. The Jewish and Christian traditions ground human relations in the notion that humans are made in the *imago dei*. As Menachem Kellner notes: "Your neighbor is no less created in the image of God than you are."⁶⁶ While the image of God is understood in various ways, virtually all tie it to the intrinsic value of the person.⁶⁷ Each human has value just because he or she is made in the image of God, and this is prior to any actions or titles that would result in external attributions of value. It even means that one has value prior to one's initial characteristics of race, gender, or personality. On this basis, the Old and New Testaments promote the love of neighbor without restriction on type of neighbor, even to the inclusion of one's enemy. 2 Enoch 44:1–3 draws the pragmatic conclusion: "Whoever insults a person's face insults the face of the Lord; whoever treats a person's

65 Cf. John Searle's "Chinese room argument," which is leveled against the strong notion of artificial intelligence, so that even computers lack these capacities.

66 Menachem Kellner, "Jewish Ethics," in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Malden: Blackwell, 1991), 85.

67 Two notes: (1) We have identified a particular quality as creating this intrinsic value, though other authors have suggested different qualities. Philip Pettit summarizes this problem: "Non-consequentialisms all identify certain values as suitable for honoring ... It is another to say why these values are so very different from the ordinary run of desirable properties" ("Consequentialism," in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer [Malden: Blackwell, 1991], 238). (2) On the Rabbinic conception of the image of God, cf. Daniel Weiss, "Direct Divine Sanction, the Prohibition of Bloodshed, and the Individual as Image of God in Classical Rabbinic Literature," *Journal of The Society of Christian Ethics* 32, no. 2 (Sept 2012): 23–38, accessed May 23, 2017, ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

face with repugnance treats the face of the Lord with repugnance.”⁶⁸ Indeed, one of the earliest arguments against slavery comes from Gregory of Nyssa, who employed an image of God argument to root the value of all humans.⁶⁹

Martin Buber also writes about the intrinsic value of the human, making the distinction between a human as a *Thou*, and an object as an *It*: “Every *It* is bounded by others; *It* exists only through being bounded by others. But when *Thou* is spoken, there is no thing. *Thou* has no bounds.”⁷⁰ A *Thou* is not encoded as a description, as such creates fixed boundaries and so “misses the truth of the event.”⁷¹ Emmanuel Levinas makes the same point, by stating that humans are not characterized by “the Same,” but by an irreducibly otherness, an “absolute resistance which by its apparition, its epiphany, it opposes to all my powers ... (it) puts a stop to the irresistible imperialism of the Same and the I.”⁷² For Levinas, this is given in one’s experience of the other’s face, and so occurs prior to cognitive engagement or interpretation. Indeed, Levinas conceives of human encounter as a revelatory event, resulting in “pure experience, conceptless experience.”⁷³ This produces an ethical demand, which is given in the experience of encounter, the most primitive of which is: “Thou shalt not kill.”⁷⁴ As Beals summarizes:

Nothing could trump the limitless value of a human life ... The life of the individual Other who shows up at one’s door in need of life-giving help has an absolute authority. It is not something that can be proven ... it simply is a brute fact.⁷⁵

An example of this type of encounter would be to imagine that a young child walks up to an adult in a busy department store, looks him or her full in the face,

68 2 (*Slavonic Apocalypse of*) *Enoch*, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, transl. F.I. Anderson, vol. 1, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 171.

69 Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Fourth Homily, trans. Richard McCambly, last retrieved July 5, 2013, <http://www.sage.edu/faculty/salomd/nyssa/eccl.html>.

70 Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Smith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937), 4.

71 Ibid., 116; and in the same section: “Reflexion ... makes God into an object.”

72 Emmanuel Levinas, “Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite,” in *To The Other*, Adriaan Peperzak (West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 1993), 109–110. Cf. Levinas, “Transcendence and Intelligibility,” 155–157.

73 Levinas, “Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite,” 118.

74 Ibid., 109. Jens Zimmerman summarizes: “Levinas enlarges (this command) in traditional fashion to mean ‘thou shalt do everything in order that the other may live’ ... All the rest is perhaps an attempt to think this” (*Recovering Theological Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 222; parenthesis mine).

75 Corey Beals, *Levinas and the Love of Wisdom* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 99.

and states: "I am lost." The adult recognizes an ethical demand, despite that fact that this child is a total stranger and has no formal claim upon one's time or attention. The demand is *given in the experience of encounter*, and occurs prior to any cognitive evaluation of the situation, expectation of return, or desire for acclaim. This is not simply an empathic response, where one feels the child's fear, and then turns and walks away: it is a demand upon one's self.

We may summarize by stating that this ethic is rooted in the notion that humans have intrinsic value, both as defined by existing in the image of God and as given in the experience of encounter.⁷⁶ On this basis alone, all humans have an identical intrinsic value, resulting in a radical egalitarianism that exists prior to all individuating characteristics, actions, or positions. This means that all humans deserve respect from all other humans, so that I treat the other (who is made in the image of God) with the same respect that I afford myself (who is made in the image of God). Put another way, *I would no more hurt, demean, or manipulate the other than I would knowingly do so to myself*. Indeed, one generally hurts, demeans, or manipulates the other by assigning less value to the other, and so turning the other into an instrument of one's own interests and goals. This ethic is concretely expressed in Andy Weir's novel, *The Martian*, where people across the earth spend their resources to bring a total stranger home. The novel ends with the protagonist contemplating this: "But really, they did it because every human being has a basic instinct to help each other out ... This is so fundamentally human that it's found in every culture without exception."⁷⁷

Before applying this to reading, we need to clarify several issues. First, it is tempting to identify this intrinsic value with human subjectivity, but this is not the case. If it were, then humans without evidence of subjectivity—newborns, humans with genetic anomalies, or adults with dementia—would be object-like. While biblical scholars have not come to any consensus on the exact nature of the image of God, it appears to be based on some unspecified similarity to God.

Second, it is tempting to see some form of reciprocal or symmetrical relations in this ethic, but this is not the case. This ethic is not based on reciprocity, as in a social contract, where I do not silence your voice because I do not want

⁷⁶ Our notion of intrinsic value is based on two positions: (1) a religious basis that is definitional (God has declared that humans are made in the image of God), and (2) an intuitionist position, as given in the experience of the encounter, and so as prior to any determination of value. The encounter functions as a brute fact of experience (cf. fn. 75 and text), and so is not determined by explanations or the assigning of predicates.

⁷⁷ Andy Weir, *The Martian: A Novel* (New York: Broadway Books, 2011), 368–369.

you to silence mine. Such reciprocal relations are maintained for the sake of preserving symmetry between persons, and not necessarily because of intrinsic value. For the same reason, our ethic is not based on the principle of ‘treat others as you want to be treated.’ Rather, our egalitarianism is rooted in intrinsic value, so that I would no more silence your voice than I would silence mine, as both have identical intrinsic value. Indeed, this extends to situations where symmetry and reciprocity have been violated: I will not manipulate your voice even if you manipulate mine, for I still recognize your intrinsic value. Consequences for the other’s actions may be called for, as in the case of slander, but I still do not turn around and slander the other.

Finally, this ethic is not tied to a superior valuation of the other, as occurs in Levinas. Levinas puts it poetically: “The Other must be closer to God than I.”⁷⁸ The case is similar for utilitarian notions, where the superior valuation is located in the larger group (the greatest good for the greatest number). Rather, our ethic poses a radical egalitarianism so that there is always a tension between humans of equal value. When conflict occurs between two humans, there are no hierarchical principles that can rank the value of one over the other, so that participants must turn to secondary principles for resolution, such as those found in utilitarian, deontological, or contractarian systems. But these are always secondary and so provisional.

Now, how is this ethic applicable to reading, especially as Buber and Levinas were addressing the value of humans and not texts? For Levinas, the text does not represent the author’s voice, for that would reduce the author to just another object in the world. Indeed, Levinas considers language to be “a betrayal,” as it reduces the author to themes and meanings which the reader can describe and classify.⁷⁹ However, this requires that the text—what Levinas calls ‘the said’—be fully reducible to themes and meanings as concrete aspects of culture.

Our contention is that such is not possible. Certain aspects of the text, such as the formal aspects, are simple reproductions of culture and so are fully

78 Levinas, “Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite,” 111–112. According to Peperzak, Levinas’ notion of equality only comes through reflection, which is after the experience of the other (*To The Other*, 28).

79 Emmanuel Levinas, “Essence and Disinterestedness,” in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 112–113. Allen summarizes, stating that readers “give ourselves permission to appropriate the text and the subject ‘in’ it. We necessarily do violence in such an encounter because we assume in those encounters that we can know the text, that we can thematize it, that we can summarize its main points and analyze its seemingly ‘fixed’ content” (“Reading the Other,” 894).

reducible to objects. But when authors use their subjectivity to cross cultural horizons, the resulting newness is never fully reducible. This is because the author formed such meaning by breaching or transcending cultural boundaries, and readers can only grasp this type of meaning by doing the same. Readers puzzle out the text's relations, using intuitions and implications, as they reach beyond their familiar horizons. One need only consider the opening line of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, where a character awakens to find that he is an insect. There is no reduction to existing cultural objects and so no full knowledge of the new. Subjective elements cannot be reduced without remainder, but always have a surplus that can only be approximated.

Another example is where poets engage in defamiliarization: they create a new image of a common object, in order to shock the reader into 'seeing' this object in a new way. Wordsworth embodies this in his vision of a field of daffodils engaging in a dance.⁸⁰ Poets attempt to make such elements understandable, but language, as a manifestation of existing cultural categories, lacks the resources to fully reveal non-cultural views. For this reason, subjective meanings will always be characterized by a 'more than.' Thus, in response to Levinas, the subjective elements of a text count as a reproduction of the author's subjectivity, however partial and incomplete, and so function as the author's voice in the world.

But there is a second reason that reading is not "a betrayal." Authors, as humans, are irreducible to themes and descriptions. But when authors write, they design their texts to be reducible to meaning(s)—this is what it means to say that writing is an intentional act, where the author attempts to say or do something. Indeed, authors design their narratives to have themes, classifications, and meanings. Hence, to refuse to create meanings is to manipulate the author's voice, not to preserve it.

From this position we may reformulate our ethic specifically for reading: I would no more manipulate or silence an author's voice than I would knowingly manipulate or silence my own. I treat the other's text with the same respect that I treat my own text. It is almost as if I-as-reader have placed myself behind a veil of ignorance, so that I do not know if the author is myself or another.⁸¹ Hence, I read *as if I might have been the author*. This does not restrict readers from critiquing and correcting the author's voice, but only means that readers allow that voice to be heard prior to initiating critique. Indeed, without first constructing the voice of the author, one must wonder what the reader is cri-

80 William Wordsworth, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*.

81 This is developed as an extension of John Rawls' thinking on political legislation.

tiquing. As Rabinowitz notes: “Judith Fetterley’s ‘resisting reader’ can come into being only if there is something to resist.”⁸²

In summary, our discussion suggests that the text includes a reproduction—however incomplete—of the author’s subjectivity, so that the text functions as the author’s voice in the world. At this point our ethic steps in and states that it is deeply problematic to silence or manipulate any voice in the world. However poorly defined the connection between the author and the text, ignoring it results in the erasure of the author, who is made in the *imago*, is a Thou, and has a face. For our model reader, the initial reading is designed to reproduce this voice, based on the guidelines provided by the author’s intentional acts of writing and publishing. Flouting these guidelines produces a different voice, a manipulated voice. This initial reading is followed by second readings for the purpose of critique, using methods designed for this purpose (e.g., feminist, post-colonial, womanist, and Marxist critiques).

4 Assumptions, Implications, and Method

Earlier in this chapter, we noted that all methods are based on assumptions, and these assumptions are reproduced in every application of that method. Only by recognizing these assumptions do readers understand the results they obtain. When readers approach a Gospel with a historical approach, they create historical data, as this is what the method is designed to reveal. But more importantly, this historical data will conform to the underlying assumptions that determine what counts as history and historical causation.⁸³ But a historical method will not reveal the literary meaning of a narrative, as it is not designed to do this.⁸⁴

For this reason, we here lay out the assumptions upon which our method is based. Attached to these assumptions is a discussion of how each contributes to the overall method of interpretation, as well as how each creates a distinction from existing methods.

(1) *Authors are subjects; readers are subjects.* Authors, as subjects, are not confined to repackaging their culture, but are capable of crossing their culture’s horizons in the creation of the new. Similarly, readers are not confined by their

82 Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 86.

83 Compare a Hegelian version of history to an Annales version.

84 Each approach stems from a different desire, adopts a different method, and creates different ‘intentional objects.’ While many strive to merge these approaches, the underlying assumptions are incompatible. It is better to keep the approaches separate and decide how the products of history affect one’s evaluation of meaning.

culture's categories and themes, as if they could only reproduce their own culture out of the text's elements. To be a subject means to have the capacity to grasp elements that are beyond one's horizons. Because of these assumptions, readers expect texts to have elements that are not part of their culture. This even allows for the notion of revelation in Biblical texts, as revelation represents a subjective element that is encoded in a cultural form.

Finally, this assumption reveals specific difference from methods that do not take human subjectivity into account. Methods based on fully deterministic assumptions attempt to fit all textual elements into the 'sameness' of the chosen system, as seen in strong forms of sociological, cultural, form, structuralist, and anthropological criticisms. Cultural violations are domesticated by forcing all aberrant bits back into the structure. Wallace Martin is explicit: "The questions the anthropologist must try to answer are the opposite of those posed by the literary critic; not 'why is this story unique?' but 'how and why is it so similar to others?'"⁸⁵ This problem was pointed out long ago by James Muilenburg, in his analysis of form criticism: "But there has been a proclivity among scholars in recent years to lay such stress upon the typical and representative that the individual, personal and unique features of the particular pericope are all but lost to view."⁸⁶

Our assumption, that authors are subjects, is not an outright rejection of these methods, for authors still reproduce their culture in their texts and these methods are necessary to understand such elements. It is only a rejection of these as a complete or even an adequate characterization of the text. Hence, one of the issues addressed in the following chapters is how these methods are utilized in the interpretive process, for while they are designed to produce cultural understanding, they lack the means to understand the new or to construct literary experience.

(2) *Writing is an intentional act; reading is an intentional act.* Authors begin with the desire to say (content) and do (effects) something. By engaging in writing behavior, they construct their texts to reproduce this something, so that when they read their own texts, they generally find these meanings and effects. By engaging in publishing behavior, they design their texts to be understandable by their intended audience. They construct their texts with this audience's language and culture, and test for understandability by reading from the position of this audience.

85 Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 23–24.

86 James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 1 (March 1969): 5, accessed March 9, 2018, doi: 10.2307/3262829.

Readers also begin with a desire, and the desire is partially determinative of what they find in the text. Readers match this desire to some reading method, and the method likewise has a hand in determining what they find. When the reader's desire is to reproduce the voice of the author, the reader adopts a method that takes account of the author's intentional acts of writing and publishing. This provides the reader with insights into the author-text relation, and so produces reading guidelines.

As writing is an intentional act, readers expect the text to be coherently organized about the author's something. For this reason, they attempt to gather a narrative's elements into larger structures, such as themes and meanings. As publishing is an intentional act, readers expect the text to use the elements of some language and culture. For this reason, they attempt to identify, characterize, and utilize that culture in their reading of the text. As authors produce their something through a narrative argument, readers expect that something to emerge by following the argument. For this reason, they engage the text's elements—events, emotions, and evaluative comments—without resistance in their initial reading of the text.

Finally, this assumption reveals specific difference from methods that ignore these guidelines. Let us briefly discuss several of these groups. Some schools reject *the guideline of coherence*, and instead privilege fragmentation, as in post-modernist approaches. Here we must be clear on the guidelines. Some texts are designed by their authors to produce fragmentation, and in these cases the intentional object is the abstract notion of fragmentation.⁸⁷ The short story, *In A Grove*, is a case in point, where a murder is presented from multiple perspectives, with no two perspectives being alike.⁸⁸ The design is clearly an attempt to embody the abstract notion of perspectivism, and readers fit the many pieces together into this coherent meaning. Any reader who constructs the meaning: 'A privileged viewing position exists,' has actually denied the coherence of the text, and is reading resistantly against the design. Our point is that the desire for coherence can easily appropriate open and ambiguous texts. Conversely, the desire for non-coherence produces fragmentation from all texts, as if this were the text's ontology. While some fragmentation pervades all texts, our model readers begin with the recognition that the author is attempting to say something, and not randomly tossing out words.

87 Similarly, some texts are designed to be dialogic (Bakhtin), to resist closure (Belsey's "interrogative texts"), or to emphasize play (Barthe's "writerly texts").

88 Ryunosuke Akutagawa, "In a Grove," in *Philosophy: An Introduction Through Literature*, ed. Lowell Kleiman and Stephen Lewis (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1990), 85–90.

Other schools ignore *the guideline suggested by understandability*, where communication requires reading from the position of the intended audience. For example, some forms of literalism assume that reading an ancient text in modern language and culture, creates the same meaning as reading in the original language and culture. Hence, this group has little interest in identifying or characterizing the intended audience. However, such a project can only succeed where the ancient symbolic universe is identical to the modern one. Language is indexed to a culture's symbolic universe, so that any change in culture necessarily changes language.

Some forms of structuralism, as well as early forms of New Criticism and narrative criticism, also fit here. These schools assume that the deep structures of the text communicate universally, so that little importance is attached to characterizing the intended audience. While it is clear that universal forms do occur, this is an incomplete characterization of the text, and specifically fails to account for the local grounding of a text's elements. As universal forms do occur, these methods must be taken into account, so that one of the issues addressed in the following chapters is how these methods are utilized in the interpretive process.

Yet other schools ignore this guideline as they have no interest in communication at all. Members in this group privilege the reader-text relation, and so promote other values, such as aesthetic pleasure, the experience of the reader, and reader creativity. This thinking is common to certain forms of New Criticism, reader-response criticism, and deconstruction. For these groups, textual autonomy is the rule, so that a turn to the 'voice of the author' is a turn to non-sense.

Finally, some schools ignore *the guideline of following the narrative argument without resistance or intrusion*. The most common type of resistant reading is to read against the formal design of the text. For example, when readers encounter a figure of speech, they may resist this design under their desire for literal speech. Similarly, when readers encounter a literary narrative, they may resist this design out of their desire for historical facts; or when they encounter a parable, they may resist the design out of their expectation for a propositional lesson. Such moves are typical in certain forms of literalism and historical criticism, where readers—implicitly or explicitly—resist the formal designs that the author employed.

Other types of resistant reading occur for ideological and cultural reasons. This would include certain types of Marxist, feminist, African-American, and post-colonial criticism, as well as certain forms of scientific criticism (reject miracles and spiritual causation) and ethical criticism (reject ethical violations). Our point is not that resistant readings should be rejected, but only that

they are not the first reading. The first reading allows the author to have his or her voice, so that readers then have something to resist. Second readings are the place for the critique of ideology, the retrieval of voices long suppressed, and the discussion about causation and ethics.

(3) *The relationship between authors and readers is ethical in nature.* Authors and readers each have an intrinsic value that is equal to that of the other. This suggests a radical egalitarianism, where each treats the other as a subject for conversation and not an object for manipulation. In our application, readers would no more treat the author as an object to be silenced, than readers would knowingly do so to themselves. Similarly, authors would no more treat readers as objects for manipulation than they would knowingly do so to themselves. Hence, within the encounter of the author and reader, both have certain responsibilities to the other.

Authors have a responsibility to treat readers with respect, by regarding them as subjects for conversation and not objects for manipulation. Here the prototypical violation is propaganda, where authors use language strategically and deceptively to manipulate readers toward their own ends.⁸⁹ Let us begin with the notion of non-deceptive speech. Non-deceptive speech occurs when the text is designed so that the something that the author constructs from the text (the actual intentional object) is identical to the something that the author expects readers to construct from the text (the ostensible intentional object).⁹⁰ Deceptive speech occurs when the two come apart, that is, where the text is designed so that the author and readers construct different meanings.

Consider a cigarette commercial that shows happy people smoking at a picnic. The author expects the viewer to construct the meaning that smoking will make the viewer happy. But when the author watches the commercial, he or she constructs a different meaning, namely, that it will convince viewers to buy their product irrespective of whether it will make them happy. In this example, the deception is made manifest by the inclusion of a warning in the product's labeling: "Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, and emphysema." This commercial is treating the reader as an object for manipulation.

89 On the strategic vs. communicative uses of language, cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

90 This is a synthesis of Searle's essential and sincerity rules for assertions, and Habermas' notion of truthfulness in validity claims. On the former, cf. John Searle, "The Structure of Illocutionary Acts," in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich (New York: Oxford, 2001), 145–146, 148; on the latter, cf. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, esp. 1.41.

Similarly, readers have a responsibility to treat authors as subjects for conversation and not objects for manipulation. Our model readers begin with the desire to construct the author's voice, which means that readers are initially interested in authentic communication. Here the prototypical violation is manipulating the author's voice under the powerful interests of the reader, as occurs in proof-texting. Such readers have no interest in the author's meanings, but only in how the text can be used to support their views. They are treating the text as an object for manipulation to their own ends, and then attributing this meaning to the author.

Communication: Ordinary and Literary

In the last chapter, we concluded that reading is an encounter between two subjects, author and reader, and that this encounter is covered by ethical principles. The encounter relates the act of writing to the act of reading, revealing that authors attempt to say something and readers attempt to recover that something. Specifically, our model readers consider the text to represent the author's voice in the world, and so treat it as a subject for conversation and not as an object for manipulation. But these principles do not determine how the encounter occurs. They only reveal that writing and reading are about communication, to the degree that such is possible, and so to this topic we now turn.

1 Ordinary Communication

While our primary interest is in narrative communication, we must begin with a few notes on communication in general. Linguistic communication only occurs under certain conditions, and these are grounded in the realization that language is metaphorical in nature. Nietzsche pointed out that words do not contain the objects to which they refer: the word 'pain' does not contain any aspect of one's actual pain, but is a metaphor for that sensation.¹ Indeed, there is no fixed connection between the two, so that different languages have different words for the same sensation. This means that the connection between a word (signifier) and its usage (signified) is arbitrary and may change across time. Arbitrary connections might suggest that language is individual and private, so that one person's use of 'pain' might be another person's use of 'salty.' But for communication to occur, the participants must agree, at least implicitly, to attach the same uses and referents to a word. Without such an agreement, according to Wittgenstein, one has a private language in which each person is using words differently, and such a language can do no communicative work.²

1 Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 874–884.

2 For Wittgenstein, a private language has no intersubjective criteria for meaning, so that each person could—in his example—be talking about a different beetle, or no beetle at all (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Wittgenstein Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Kenny [Malden: Blackwell, 1994], 155–156).

This implicit agreement suggests that public language is largely conventional in nature, where all participants agree to employ the same alphabet and uses for a word.³ The connection between a word and its usage is generated by intersubjective agreement among participants of a culture, and is maintained by the social institutions of that culture (we will define culture in the next chapter). This is not to say that all members have an identical understanding of the same word; indeed, one can never know exactly how another person understands any word.⁴ But there is sufficient similarity for the coordination of behavior, so that when I ask a person to do something and the person performs that action, the behavior shows that communication has occurred. Behavioral verification even reveals that communication occurs across cultures. Here the central example is an international treaty with mutual verifiability conditions, where both sides agree to engage in specific behaviors, and then are checked by the other side. These examples suggest that communication does occur and can be verified, despite the lack of precision.

This discussion allows us to posit two central conclusions. First, public language is conventional in nature, and these conventions are the result of a broad intersubjective agreement. These conventions are impressed upon a group's members in childhood, as part of their cultural heritage, and so seem natural. For this reason, participants are usually unaware of the prior agreement, so that language brings in elements of what Jürgen Habermas calls "unconscious presuppositions" and Duncan Salkeld calls "dark histories."⁵ There is a reason why God is called "Father" in our Gospels, and while modern readers may be unaware of this reason, it remains as a residue with an influence.

Second, for communication to occur, all participants must choose to use the same public language. Participants are under no obligation to do so. My readers not required to use Modern English, and may decide to use the conventions

3 On the notion of a convention, as a solution to coordination within a group, see Anita Avramides, "Intention and Convention," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Bob Hale and Crispin Wright (Malden: Blackwell, 1997), 60–86, esp. 81. On the conventional nature of public language, see Chapter 1, fn. 11.

4 This is Quine's 'indeterminacy of translation;' cf. Willard Quine, "Ontological Relativity," *The Journal of Philosophy* 65, no. 7 (April 1968), 185–212. We follow Crispin Wright's "weak version" of this theory ("The Indeterminacy of Translation," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Bob Hale and Crispin Wright [Malden: Blackwell, 1997], 400).

5 Jürgen Habermas, "On Hermeneutics' Claim to Universality," In *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 298; Duncan Salkeld, "New Historicism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 60.

of Middle English or Early Modern English. When taken to the extreme, such readers reject the generally accepted conventions for Modern English, and so retreat into a private language without the expectation of communication. But if my readers desire communication, they turn to the same public language that I employ in my text, and apply this language in its standard form and usage.

Only this does not imply that participants always use language in standard ways. Authors may employ subjective additions as part of their creative engagement with language. But if they desire communication, they must still place these bits of newness in largely conventional structures, as in our example of a malapropism from the last chapter.⁶ Indeed, if an author were to use every word in a non-conventional way, communication would be impossible. As Barbara Johnstone notes: “All creativity has to be embedded in the familiar ... complete creativity is also impossible, because there would be no way to interpret it.”⁷

This discussion suggests that communication occurs under an *implicit social contract*, in which both participants agree to employ the same language, and generally to use its conventions in a standard way. The contract is implicit, as participants are not actively aware of making this choice. Most simply assume that their conversation partner is from the same speech community. But this agreement is revealed when attending a Renaissance festival, where the actors and merchants employ an older form of English. If attendees are interested in communication, they must actively choose to set aside their Modern English conventions for those interactions. Miscommunications between the two may occur, but these are recognized when the conversation creates the expectation for some behavior that does not occur. At such junctures, the participants engage in further conventional behavior to indicate the break (e.g., “I do not understand what you mean”) and restore communication (e.g., “What I meant to say was”).

The contract is more complicated in reading. Unlike the conversation at a Renaissance festival, the text is unable to ‘talk back’ to the reader or change its language to accommodate a different audience. For communication to occur here, readers must choose to employ the conventions and culture of the intended audience. Let us examine this with the example of modern Americans reading *Hamlet*, but without knowledge of Shakespeare’s time or culture. Such readers might begin under the assumption that *Hamlet* is written in Modern English. Indeed, the first line seems to confirm this assumption: “Who’s

6 Wittgenstein calls this “stage setting,” and applies it to neologisms (*The Wittgenstein Reader*, 147).

7 Barbara Johnstone, *Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 192.

there?" But readers are surprised by the next line: "Nay, answer me: stand and unfold yourself." This line creates a disjunction, where the expectation for Modern English is not met.

Fortunately, language disjunctions are of specific types, and their characteristics help readers to identify and resolve such disjunctions. While our discussion of disjunctions occurs later in this chapter, one type is the cross-cultural disjunction, and its defining characteristics include multiple disjunctions in all speech types throughout the entire text. When our readers of *Hamlet* come, in rapid succession, upon Bernardo's "The rivals of my watch," Francisco's "Stand, ho," Horatio's "Friends to this ground," and Marcellus' "Liegeman to the Dane," they recognize these as disjunctions in all speech types throughout the text, suggesting that the text was written with a difference audience in mind.⁸ If these readers are interested in communication, they must change the language and culture they use in reading *Hamlet*. They actively choose to identify, characterize, and apply the culture of late sixteenth-century England.

Cross-cultural disjunctions are easily recognized when reading Chaucer or Shakespeare, but more challenging when distinguishing between dialects. Nevertheless, careful readers navigate these waters without great difficulty, even when distinguishing between the speech communities of different disciplines (e.g., the journals of poets vs. chemists). More problematic is the situation where an ancient text has been translated into Modern English, as many of the cues for cultural shifts are smoothed over or eliminated. In such cases, modern readers often assume that the text's language is attached to their own worldview. Modern readers of translated works, such as *Beowulf* and the New Testament, may understand the Modern English words and sentences, but unless they root these in the culture of the intended audience, the communication is distorted. From this discussion, we may now lay out one of the central conditions for literary communication, namely that *readers must correctly identify, develop, and apply the linguistic and literary competences of the intended audience*.

2 Narrative Communication: Authors

From this base, we now turn to the specifics of narrative communication. The traditional narrative model is that an extratextual author employs a variety of intratextual intermediates (implied author, narrator, narratee, implied reader),

⁸ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 1, scene 1.

which are encountered by an extratextual reader.⁹ However, this model is too simple to describe narrative communication adequately. It is better to separate the author's involvement from the reader's involvement in this process. Let us begin with the authorial side.

Authors create a narrative by imagining a world populated with characters and events, but they do not necessarily believe that these are actual characters and events. Indeed, some authors write about worlds that are patently false (fantasy) and events that never happened (fiction). Nevertheless, they present these elements convincingly, almost as if they believed that humans could become bugs (*The Metamorphosis*) or trees could talk (*Lord of the Rings*). It appears that authors assume a role in which they write about imagined worlds as if they were real worlds. As Wayne Booth notes: "Everyone knows that authors must take on roles, that they need not be 'sincerely' wedded to particular characteristics in order to portray them sympathetically."¹⁰ This role is called the implied author, who is "created (at least partly consciously) by the real author in the same way that he or she creates characters and plots,"¹¹ and functions as "a sender in the process of literary communication."¹²

In short, authors produce (create, project) an image of themselves, and they overwrite this image with beliefs that they may not hold. These 'images' write with sincerity, as if they believe that the storyworld is a real world. In a similar way, actors project an image of their actual selves, overwrite it with the beliefs of some character, and then act out this part like a real person. Both are fictional constructs designed to carry out the intentional acts of the real person behind the construct. It is for this reason that implied authors seem to present the beliefs of their actual authors, and, indeed, readers often make just this attribution. Readers of the Gospel of Mark know that the implied author believes that Jesus is the "son of God" (Mk. 1:1) and secondarily attribute this belief to the actual author. We will identify this authorial construct as the 'implied authorA,' in order to distinguish it from other types of implied authors in this text and in the broader literature,¹³ and characterize it as the fictional construct created by the actual author to carry out his or her intentional acts.

9 On these, esp. see Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), Chapter 7.

10 Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 254.

11 Peter Rabinowitz, "The Absence of Her Voice from that Concord': The Value of the Implied Author," *Style* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 104; author's parentheses.

12 Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller, "Six Ways Not to Save the Implied Author," *Style* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 69, accessed April 14, 2014, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost.

13 Cf. *Ibid.*, 67–79; these authors present six different types of implied authors, though most

When the implied authorA writes, he or she does so with an audience in mind. This returns us to the meaning of publishing behavior, namely that the author desires to be understandable by a particular audience (the intended audience). Authors do not apply the language conventions of their own speech community, but represent the intended audience to themselves, forming an image of that community's language and culture (the authorial audience).¹⁴ Authors use this image to overwrite the implied authorA, so that this construct writes with the appropriate language conventions. This suggests that, for authors, *the meaning of the text is not accessed through their private experiences or their own private language, but through the public language of the intended audience.*

This discussion produces the following communicative chain, which outlines how authors design their communicative acts:

[author → implied authorA—authorial audience → text.....intended audience]

In this diagram, the arrows connect the author, via intentional causation, to various constructs. The author constructs the implied authorA, designing it with literary elements (e.g., genre), language elements (e.g., dialect, speech community), and cultural elements (e.g., the use of a worldview, social institutions). But the author manages all of these in order to be understandable to his or her authorial audience. The dotted line represents the author's expectations, which are not actually in the text. So, the dotted line indicates the author's expectation that the authorial audience is an accurate representation of the intended audience, and that the intended audience (not some other audience) is reading the text.

3 Literary Communication: Readers

Next, we turn to the reader's involvement in the communicative process. The reader may begin with the words of the text, but this is not the starting point. Reading is an intentional act, which means that reading begins with a desire, such as the desire to experience aesthetic pleasure, to find meaning, to locate a culture, or to understand history. But a desire gives no guidance in how to achieve these ends, so that the reader next selects a method. If a reader desires

represent variants of the two types we will use. Cf. Rabinowitz, "The Absence of Her Voice," 99–108, esp. 105.

14 On the term 'authorial audience,' see Chapter 1, fn. 19 and text.

to find history, he or she adopts a historical method. The problem is that methods were not designed to meet the reader's desires. Methods were developed by someone as an embodiment of that person's assumptions about the world. The method manages the raw elements of the text so that it reproduces those assumptions, that is, it reproduces the ideology of the method's creator. Readers tend to think that the application of method eliminates bias and delivers objective truth. But method is the very embodiment of perspectival bias. More to the point here, these ideologies have significant implications for the communicative process.

Let us consider the example of New Criticism. This method is rooted in the Kantian assumption of 'free beauty,' where aesthetic beauty is not located in the author's culture, concepts, or intentions.¹⁵ New Critics embody this assumption in a method, which utilizes the technique of 'close reading,' where attention is focused on the text to the exclusion of its cultural context, biographical linkages, or authorial intentions. As Jan Veenstra summarizes: "Their scrupulous principles of analysis carefully warded off all links with the exterior environment, which, in effect, became a forbidden world of authors, readers, and social circumstance."¹⁶ The resulting method makes specific demands on the communication model. By severing the author-text and culture-text connections, it *invalidates the implicit social contract upon which communication is based*. This was not a problem for most New Critics, as they did not consider literary texts to be about communication in the first place, but about the creation of aesthetic pleasure.

Indeed, each type of criticism places certain constraints on communication, determining how communication occurs, and even what counts as communication. Consider Roland Barthes' formulation of the Death of the Author movement, which suggests that the author "can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original," so that the text is only "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture."¹⁷ Here communication is restricted to cultural reproduction—nothing more. Some forms of historical criticism treat a narrative text as a collection of propositional facts, so that

15 See discussion in Peter Zima, *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), 3–5 (on Kant) and 19–24 (on New Criticism). Note that the New Critics took Kantian assumptions well beyond Kant's thinking; cf. Harold Langsam, "Kant, Hume, and our Ordinary Concept of Causation," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54, no. 3 (Sept 1994): 625–647.

16 Jan Veenstra, "The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt: On Poetics of Culture and the Interpretation of Shakespeare," *History and Theory* 34, no. 3 (October 1995): 176.

17 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1468.

the literary form of the text does not count in their communication process. Some forms of feminist, post-colonial, and Marxist criticism constrain communication to ideology or ideological reproduction. As Andrew Edgar writes: "In effect, the work of art is credited with no meaning or worth independent of its ideological position."¹⁸ In deconstruction, the very notion of communication is sacrificed, as literature becomes "an unsettling venture into the inner void of the text which lays bare the illusoriness of meaning ... (it is) the cemetery of communication."¹⁹ Here the text is engaged as if the reader were its author, and the actual author is fully ignored or, in our words, silenced.

Our ethic of reading also manages the communication process, in this case by constraining it to a particular speech community. Our readers begin with the desire to hear the author's voice, and so turn to the implicit social contract of communication. On this basis, readers recognize the need to determine the intended audience to which the author writes. While we discuss the means for doing this in the next chapter, suffice it to say that readers attempt to match textual clues to various historical audiences, and so identify the general audience whose language and social institutions are encoded in the text.

Once the intended audience is identified, our readers describe and adopt their literary conventions, along with the culture to which those conventions are indexed. This includes the larger frameworks of various social institutions, such as the literary, family, religious, and political institutions. It even extends to the symbolic universe that supports these institutions, investing them with specific meanings for that culture. In short, our readers do not approach the text with their own language and cultural competencies, but *as a projection of themselves which has been modified—or better, overwritten—with the beliefs and institutions of the intended audience*. No longer do such readers approach the Gospels with the understanding that foods are neutral objects, but with the conviction that certain ones are contaminating and polluting. We will call this reading construct the 'ideal reader.'²⁰

18 Andrew Edgar, "Adorno and the Early Frankfurt School," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 111.

19 Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 126; my parenthesis.

20 There are many types of readers posed by the literature, such as the "ideal reader" (Robert Fowler, Wolfgang Iser), the "informed reader" (Stanley Fish), the "model reader" (Umberto Eco), and the "superreader" (Michael Riffaterre). All represent an expansion of the traditional implied reader, which is a textual construct only for the text in hand, by adding various competencies which come from 'outside' the text. Our version is built upon a pro-

There are three central limitations in the production of the ideal reader. First, readers can never fully grasp another culture's engagement with the world. Even when employing the appropriate disciplines (history, sociology, anthropology, etc.), readers lack the memories upon which these engagements were formed, and the residues that such engagements build up over time.²¹ While ideal readers may be overwritten to believe that storms are caused by spirits, they will never existentially understand the fear and dread of a demonic wind. This is not to say that characterizing another culture is impossible, for that would suggest that humans cannot overcome the barriers to otherness. But it is to say that characterization is always partial, so that communication is always provisional and subject to revision.

Fortunately, there are ways of testing the readers' grasp of another culture. A narrative usually encodes multiple elements of any cultural system. Readers expect these elements to be connected in a way that reproduces the system, bringing a general coherence to the text. For example, when first-century Mediterranean readers encounter the Markan text that deals with an epileptic child (Mk. 9:14–29), they invoke their cultural system for understanding epilepsy, where the uncontrollable shaking is caused by spiritual influences, results in abnormal behavior, and is cured by an exorcism, prayer, or powerful root.²² This system brings coherence to the many textual elements.

But modern readers have a different system for epilepsy, where the shaking is due to aberrant electrical impulses in the brain and is controlled by medicines. When modern readers engage the Markan text, they still recognize the typical symptoms of epilepsy, include the shaking, the limited time of the malady, and the lethargy following the seizure. These textual elements fit into their mod-

jection of the actual reader, where existing competencies are overwritten by those of the intended audience, while untouched areas of the actual reader fill in the gaps. Hence, this ideal reader is expected to encounter cross-cultural disjunctions, and such are resolved by creating a more adequate characterization of the intended audience.

21 This comment is based on our definition of culture, as developed in Chapter 3, which includes the notion that culture represents group memories that are passed down through generations.

22 This appears to be the case in Jewish literature in general. While other causes and treatments did occur in the ancient world, most maintained a connection to the divine. Donald Todman summarizes the Hippocratic view: "The subtle difference is that no disease has anything particularly to do with the divine but rather all are divine because nature is divine" ("Epilepsy in the Graeco-Roman World: Hippocratic Medicine and Asklepiian Temple Medicine Compared," *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences* 17 [2008]: 437; accessed June 5, 2017, doi 10.1080/0964704070142608). Evidence for the penetration of wholly materialistic systems, as would be expected in Epicureanism, is lacking, especially as Judaism rejected these for being atheistic.

ern system. But other elements do not fit, such as the discussion about spirits and the exorcism. These are disjunctions, where the readers' system cannot incorporate major textual elements, almost as if the text were using a different system. Indeed, this textual resistance suggests that readers have mischaracterized the culture of the intended audience.

The second limitation is that authors write to an authorial audience that is also an approximation of the intended audience. Readers generally assume that the author's grasp of the intended audience is accurate, so that the authorial audience is identical to the intended audience. The means for checking this assumption again rests on the presence of disjunctions: if the authorial audience is different than the intended audience, then the intended audience (and any ideal reader modeled on it) will create a series of disjunctions when reading that text. This uncommon situation occurs when the author is from a different culture than the intended audience. Such is the case with the Gergasene demoniac (Mk. 5:1), where the author appears to be unaware of the geographic location of Gerasa. Adela Collins notes the confusion: "The specification must have been made by someone who did not realize how far Gerasa was from the Sea of Galilee."²³ To the intended audience, this story must have seemed very odd, and so created a disjunction in reading.

The third limitation is that the intended audience is not wholly uniform. Language and culture do not fully level their membership into a single, objective type. Not only do various speech communities exist within a geographic culture, but the subjectivity of each member continues to intrude, so that there is no fully definable intended audience. Indeed, a first-century person could use his or her subjectivity to produce a story about an epileptic who is cured by taking pills! Nevertheless, most speech communities within a culture share a sufficient number of assumptions for communication to occur. These dialect-like variations are not wholly incommensurate: poets can still talk to chemists, and both can order the same pizza from a restaurant. As Richard Bauckham writes about first-century Judaism: "The current trend to emphasize diversity to such an extent as to speak of 'Judaisms' in the plural has rightly been challenged by E.P. Sanders's claim that it makes sense to speak of a 'common Judaism' that most Jews shared."²⁴

23 Adela Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 266.

24 Richard Bauckham, "The Relevance of Extracanonical Jewish Texts to New Testament Study," in *Hearing The New Testament*, ed. Joel Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 96. Even in a paradigm shift, where the two languages are incommensurate (based on different categories), sufficient language resources exist for the one scientist to convey the specifics of that shift to another.

Once the ideal reader is created, the reader proceeds to engage the text. The ideal reader creates the storyworld by applying these new cultural competencies to the words of the text. Only narratives do not utilize all of a culture's competencies. Readers only find certain competencies called upon, so that they increasingly read from a particular position or perspective within that culture. In short, texts require a narrowed-down ideal reader. For example, the ideal reader of the Gospels would have a full grasp of that region's religious institutions, including the various forms of Judaic, Roman, and Egyptian religions. But the Gospels are not designed to be read from the perspective of the cult of Mithris, even though the Lord's Supper shares similar language. Similarly, *The Life of Apollonius* does not select for a Christian reader or perspective.

Rather, the Gospels select for a reader who has competency in the several forms of Jewish religion, so as to understand the reasoning of Jesus and his disciples, as well as their interactions with the Pharisees and Sadducees. Indeed, the Gospel authors assume that the reader is using this perspective, and so do not spend time explaining why Jesus enters the synagogue on the Sabbath or why he reads and teaches the scriptures. When Jesus comes into conflict with the religious institution, he offers reasons from within this tradition, and not from some outside religion (e.g., Mt. 12:3, 22:29).

In summary, readers approach the text as an ideal reader, but as soon as the text is engaged, only certain competencies are called upon by the text, so that the ideal reader is narrowed down to particular competencies, beliefs, and positions. This produces a perspectival position for reading, which is especially important when filling the gaps in the Gospels, *for these are filled from the position of a Jewish religious person and not from the cult of Mithris*. We will call this construct the implied reader, and define it as the reading position contoured by the expectations for understanding that are inherent in the text.

For most texts, and certainly for ancient texts, the author shapes the text to support a single implied reader, so that reading is done from a single perspectival position.²⁵ This position is sequentially modified as the text shapes the implied reader throughout the text—it is a dynamic and not a static position.²⁶ The initial implied reader for Matthew is a Jewish religious person who

25 Cf. Brian Richardson: "I believe that the presence of multiple implied readers in a single text is a fairly rare phenomenon and should not be confused with other, more familiar kinds of ambiguous, polysemous, or multivocal texts" ("Singular Text, Multiple Implied Readers," *Style* 41, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 267, accessed May 13, 2014, Academic Search Complete EBSCOhost). He even notes that the polyphonic novel with its "multiple voices, jargons, and perspectives imply a protean but ultimately single implied reader" (*Ibid.*, 268).

26 The implied reader is only a static construct in a synchronic approach, where the whole

accepts the authority of the religious leaders and the validity of the Jewish institutions. But the text narrows and shapes this position, so that the later implied reader is a Jewish religious person who conceives of the religious authorities and institutions as corrupt, and so reads from a Jewish reformer's perspective.

Other interpretive methods also use an implied reader, and the differences between the various uses of this construct need to be addressed.²⁷ Early forms of narrative criticism viewed the implied reader as a textual construct that is unique to each text. This implied reader fits under objective types of criticism (Abram's classification) and remains static across actual readings.²⁸ It is constructed by a neutral reader who is external to the text (not a participant in the event) and possesses the proper tools to recognize this construct 'in' the text.

There are several problems with this view. Centrally, authors do not expect neutral readers, but readers with the perspective of the intended audience. The author of Matthew expected his readers to come to the text with their first-century Jewish biases and beliefs intact, and *only from this position to have their biases and beliefs shifted*. Indeed, readers cannot read from some theoretical neutral position, but are always enculturated so that the construction of the implied reader necessarily shifts from culture to culture.²⁹ Furthermore, authors do not expect readers to stand outside of the narrative, objectively looking down on the events and passing judgment. They expect readers to participate and be shaped by their experiences in the events. Hence reading from a neutral, external position actually produces a distortion in narrative communication.

The later schools of narrative criticism and reader-response criticism also utilized an implied reader, but moved in a pragmatic direction.³⁰ Here the

text is immediately present at the beginning of reading. We are using a diachronic reading, where the implied reader is sequentially narrowed and shifted as the text unfolds.

27 For a summary, cf. William Nelles, "Historical and Implied Authors and Readers," *Comparative Literature*, 45.1 (Winter 1993): 29–35. Note that further levels of complexity occur within the narrative itself, as outlined by Paul Goetsch, "Reader Figures in Narrative," *Style* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 188–202, accessed Dec. 5, 2016, *Expanded Academic ASAP*.

28 Cf. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 19–21. On the "universalizing ambitions of narratology," see Gerald Prince, "Narratology," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: From Formalism to Poststructuralism*, vol. 8, ed. Raman Selden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 125–126.

29 As Powell notes: "Descriptions of ideal implied readers, furthermore, are always offered by actual readers and will inevitably reflect the particular interests or conditioning of the latter" (*What is Narrative Criticism*, 20).

30 These approaches generally limit their implied reader to the culture of the intended audience, and so are not fully pragmatic in nature. More 'radical' schools of reader-response are fully pragmatic, as they have no use for an intended audience. Cf. Kevin Vanhoozer:

implied reader is a role that actual readers assume, as guided by textual suggestions. Robert Fowler writes: “The implied reader is the reader we must be willing to become, at least temporarily, in order to experience the narrative in fullest measure.”³¹ This is closer to our implied reader, though with a different focus. Many of these former critics have the goal of full literary or aesthetic response, while our goal is full communication. This differing focus results in different valuations on the use of the intended audience’s culture, which is crucial for communication but not for aesthetic pleasure.

The final component of the communication system, from the reader’s side, is the creation of the implied author. Earlier we examined the construction of the implied authorA, as the fictional role the author assumes in order to write. This is a private construct in the author’s mind to which readers have no direct access. But readers do sense an authorial presence behind the text, a “selecting, structuring, and presiding intelligence.”³² According to Booth, readers construct an implied author out of “the reader’s need to know where, in the world of values, he stands—that is, to know where the author wants him to stand.”³³ When modern readers engage the genre of fantasy, they recognize the belief in magical causation, along with the expectation that they apply this belief to the text. They have constructed another type of implied author—one who believes in magic—though this one is based on the readers’ engagement with textual data. We will call this construct the implied authorR.

The distinction between the implied authorA and the implied authorR is clearly visible in an example from Peter Rabinowitz. Commenting on one of the male authors in the Nancy Drew series, he notes: “He was writing ‘as a female’—and he was certainly received as a female by the girls who read him. Surely the notion of the implied author is a handy way of talking about that duality.”³⁴ The statement: “He was writing ‘as a female,’” is our implied authorA, which is the fictional position the author assumes in writing. The statement: “He was certainly received as a female by the girls who read him,” is our implied

“‘Radical’ reader-response critics ... privilege the ideology or position of the reader rather than that of the text” (“The Reader in New Testament Interpretation,” in *Hearing The New Testament*, ed. Joel Green [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 307).

31 Robert Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 33.

32 Stephen Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 46. Cf. Nelles: “Each *implied* author is a critical construct, inferred from the text and with no existence outside that text” (“Historical and Implied Authors and Readers,” 26).

33 Wayne Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 73.

34 Rabinowitz, “The Absence of Her Voice,” 105; my parentheses.

authorR, which is how readers grasp or characterize the writer whom they perceive in the text. Importantly, the implied authorR is the reader's construction of the writer (a female) and may bear little resemblance to the actual author (a male).

But there is a correspondence between the implied authorR and the implied authorA. Genuine communication may be said to occur when the implied authorR is nearly identical to the implied authorA, that is, when the reader's construct of the author—at the level of beliefs, values, and convictions—matches the construct used by the author. Communication in a fantasy novel occurs when the implied authorR (constructed by the reader) and implied authorA (constructed by the author) have a corresponding belief in magic. Indeed, if the reader's implied authorR does not accept magical causation, then much of a Harry Potter novel will not make sense. This is also the error behind the Jefferson Bible. Thomas Jefferson rejected the possibility of miracles and so constructed an implied authorR who did the same. But this is very different from the implied authorA, who clearly accepts the validity of Jesus' miracles, so that Jefferson's reading represents a distortion of narrative communication.

The opening line in the Gospel of Mark offers a simple example of how the implied authorR is constructed: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ the Son of God." Readers attribute this remark to the author, though it represents the beliefs and values of the implied authorR.³⁵ This line functions as an "introductory sentence" to the larger text,³⁶ explicitly telling readers how to understand this text's central character. Indeed, it gives readers special knowledge that is not available to the characters in the text, and so forms the basis for an ongoing dramatic irony throughout the narrative. This irony is explicitly seen in Mark 6:2–3, where the people state that Jesus is simply another person from their village, with no greater wisdom or power than anyone else. But readers know that the implied authorR thinks very differently, and so reject this evaluation. Once readers have constructed the implied authorR, they use its value and beliefs to texture the remainder of the text.

35 Technically, this is 'voiced' by the narrator. Let me summarize the reader's connections for clarity: the title is voiced by a reliable narrator, as a sincere manifestation of the beliefs of the implied authorR, and this is assumed to represent the beliefs of the actual author—as generally occurs in nonfiction—though it actually represents the beliefs of the implied authorA.

36 Collins, *Mark*, 130–131. Cf. Elizabeth Malbon, who sees it as the "title of the work" (*Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009], 58–66).

means, perhaps even stating that his or her use of ‘broccoli’ should be understood to mean ‘cauliflower.’³⁸ This direct connection is assumed in schools espousing the stance of strong intentionalism. At core, this stance suggests that language is so ambiguous that it is incapable of determining meaning by itself; hence readers turn to the author for validity (note that deconstruction begins with the same language assumption, but instead turns to the reader). Furthermore, without the intermediary of the implied authorA—which allows for fictional authorial roles—the author can only state what he or she actually believes, so that fiction and fantasy would become impossible.

Another way of gaining access to the actual author is through the stance of hypothetical intentionalism.³⁹ Here readers create an author-construct from the author’s biography and writings, and use this construct to understand the text’s meaning. Technically, this hypothetical author replaces the implied authorA, so that the actual author—with all of his or her subjectivity—is excised. In short, this author-construct is the prisoner of the actual author’s past, so that the text echoes the author’s biography.

Instead, our diagram shows that communication occurs at the node between the authorial audience and the implied reader.⁴⁰ Communication is theoretically possible here, as both are using language modeled on the same intended audience. However, communication across this node is only potential. Meaning, as the actualization of communication, only occurs when the implied reader interacts with the language of the text. As we will see in the following chapters, readers create meaning by participating in the narrative’s events.

Finally, this diagram can be used to characterize and critique a variety of other interpretive methods. We have already noted several examples, but here turn to E.D. Hirsch’s actual intentionalism and one of the forms of literalism. Hirsch’s model reader begins with the same desire as our model reader, to recover the author’s voice, but matches this to a different set of methodological steps. Hirsch has the reader approach the text from the position of the author, by having the reader “reproduce in himself the author’s ‘logic,’ his attitudes, his cultural givens, in short, his world ... the imaginative reconstruction of the

38 This example is adapted from Sherri Irvin, “Authors, Intentions and Literary Meaning,” *Philosophy Compass* 1/2 (2006): 114, accessed June 5, 2012, doi:10.1111/j.1747-9991.2006.00016.x.

39 On these stances, and the problematic assumptions on which they are based, see Chapter 1, fn. 23.

40 This may seem to contradict our conclusion in the last section, where we noted that communication is expected to occur when the implied authorR matches the implied authorA. However, readers have no access to the implied authorA, so that this is only a theoretical consideration.

speaking subject.”⁴¹ His goal is for the reader to approach the text in the same way as the author, so that the reader creates the same intentional object as the author. In doing so, Hirsch has the reader function as a mock author, and so eliminates the reader’s side of the communication model.

For this to work, Hirsch must make several problematic assumptions. First, he assumes that readers can accurately predict how an author’s earlier life experiences will shape the author’s later writings, as if there were fixed psychological laws connecting the two. If this were the case, then interpretation could be reduced to a law-like (nomothetic) psychology, and the notion of human subjectivity would be vacuous. Second, this stance assumes that authors do not change, so that all future writings represent the same effects of those earlier experiences. Like a *tabula rasa*, authors would repeat the experiences written on their historical slates, so that interpretation would reduce the text to an allegory of the author’s biography. In summary, Hirsch’s method, while originating in the same desire as our method, employs steps that impede genuine communication.

Next, let us turn to literalism. Here readers also begin with a desire to hear the author’s voice, but match this to a different set of steps. While there are several types of literalism, the one in view here assumes that there is a natural and universal way of reading.⁴² Because it is universal, readers need not take account of cultural differences. When modern readers engage an ancient text, they create the same intentional object as the original audience. However, for this project to work, one must assume that the authorial audience, intended audience, and actual reader are all identical—all use the same universal language—so that the actual reader replaces these in the communication model. This removes the necessity for all intermediates between the author and reader, so that communication is direct and timeless. One only needs to read Shakespeare, or the original King James Bible, to recognize the error here.

5 Disjunctions: When Communication Fails

At this point we can address the problem of miscommunication in narratives. The primary means of recognizing miscommunication is the disjunction. A disjunction occurs when readers create a bit of meaning that does not fit into their

41 E.D. Hirsch, “Objective Interpretation,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1707.

42 This form of literalism is rooted in Platonism, with its ideal—and so universal and unchangeable—forms.

expectation of what should have occurred, and so produces a gap in sense-making. Thomas Kuhn notes that the recognition of newness only arises “for the man who, knowing with precision what he should expect, is able to recognize that something has gone wrong.”⁴³ In our example of epilepsy, modern readers expect the epileptic character to be given a pill, but instead are surprised with an exorcism. While readers may resolve this in a variety of ways, the fact of the surprise—the bit that was not expected—marks the presence of a disjunction. As disjunctions are based on the reader’s expectations, we must begin with the expectations themselves.

The central expectations, based on our analysis of intentional acts, are that the text is designed to say and do something, and that the text is designed to be understandable. The ‘say and do’ part creates an expectation of textual coherence. The ‘understandable’ part creates the expectation that the author used the intended audience’s language competently and conventionally. These expectations define where breakdowns occur in communication. Hence, we may rewrite these expectations in a way that outlines the types of disjunctions.

The first reader expectation is for coherence at all levels of language. If an English alphabet is employed and a single Russian letter appears, it creates a disjunction. If a narrative employs the genre markers for history and a magical event occurs, it creates a disjunction. If a character drinks poison and then merrily skips around, it creates a disjunction. Anytime such an expectation is breached, readers stop to deal with that unexpected element. The element is not ignored but is assumed to be part of the larger something that the author is attempting to say.⁴⁴ Hence, readers attempt to resolve the disjunction in a way that restores coherence to the text.

The resolution of a disjunction is rooted in the second expectation, that the text is understandable. Disjunctions are gaps in sense-making, where communication has gone off the rails, so that the text—in the instant the disjunction is recognized—is evaluated as ‘not understandable.’ As this is a communica-

43 Kuhn is addressing the notion that observation is so theory-laden that one only ‘sees’ what one’s theories allow one to see, but then notes that what one ‘sees’ may not fit into those theories; these are the errors that suggest something new (*The Nature and Necessity of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed., in *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, vol. 2, no. 2 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970], 65).

44 Cf. H.P. Grice’s “cooperative principle” where “each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction” (“Logic and Conversation,” in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 167). For the theoretical framework, i.e., that these are epistemological issues, see Chapter 6, section on Experience of Event: Words to Sentences.

tion problem, readers turn to their assumptions about understandability, of which there are three. The first is that authors are using the language of the actual reader. When this assumption is breeched, a *cross-cultural disjunction* occurs. The second assumption is that authors are using language competently. When authors breech this assumption, by being inept in their usage, a *casual intracultural disjunction* occurs. The third assumption is that authors are using language conventionally. When authors breech this assumption, by employing uncommon or new uses of language, a *moderate intracultural disjunction* or a *radical intracultural disjunction* occurs. To these four types of disjunctions we now turn.

The first type is the cross-cultural disjunction, which occurs when readers use a different language and culture than the author. This distorts communication at the deepest level, as the author is basing his or her construct for writing (implied authorA) in one culture, with its symbolic universe and social institutions, while readers are basing their construct (ideal reader) in a different one. In our model, each is using a different intended audience.

While it might seem that applying a different culture simply produces a different coherent narrative, this is not the case. As noted earlier, authors encode whole systems in their texts, and it is rarely the case that a system from one culture can accommodate all the textual elements of a system from a different culture. A first-century system dealing with epilepsy will have elements that cannot be accommodated by a modern system. These non-fitting elements identify the disjunction and suggest that a different culture is in use. Thus, the identifying characteristics of a cross-cultural disjunction are the presence of disjunctions throughout the entire text, without restriction to any speech area or characters.⁴⁵

An example of a cross-cultural disjunction occurs when modern readers encounter the Markan windstorm (Mk. 4:35–41). These readers grasp wind with a modern worldview, where such are physical entities, and this creates specific expectations, namely, that the disciples must row harder or lose the ship. But in the story, Jesus orders the wind to be muzzled (*phimoō*). This creates a disjunction, where 'ordering the wind' is both unexpected and makes no sense.

The resolution to a cross-cultural disjunction is to identify the intended audience and construct an ideal reader based on that audience. In our example, readers turn to first-century Jewish thinking, and here find the belief that

45 It is not uncommon for an author to have one character with abnormal speech patterns, so that cross-cultural disjunctions require all characters to have abnormal speech patterns.

winds are controlled by angels, gods, and demons.⁴⁶ Readers overwrite their ideal reader with this belief, so that when this ideal reader encounters the wind-storm, readers grasp it as a wind-spirit that is trying to kill the disciples. In this system, Jesus' command to the wind functions as an exorcism. As Paul Achtemeier writes: "In short, Jesus is combating and defeating the demonic powers when he stills the storm just as he does when he exorcises a demon."⁴⁷ In short, applying this cultural system restores coherence.

However, these elements could be brought into coherence in a variety of other ways: Jesus could be a divine man (*theios anēr*),⁴⁸ be a charlatan,⁴⁹ be a magician over demons,⁵⁰ use higher demons to control the storm-demon,⁵¹ or just have gotten lucky.⁵² If this were the only story under consideration, it would be impossible to determine which system the author was using. But this story is part of a larger Gospel, so that readers can search for other elements of each system, and thereby determine which systems do not fit. For example, readers who think that Jesus is operating by the power of demons would expect to find him sacrificing to the demons, and certainly not praying to God (Mk. 14:36) or proclaiming the scriptures (Mk. 1:21). Readers who think that Jesus is operating as a divine man would not expect him to be constrained by human unbelief (Mk. 6:5) or controlled by human actions (arrest, crucifixion). Readers who think that Jesus is a charlatan would expect to find tricks and deception, coupled with a desire for money or power. In short, the larger narrative can be used to support or invalidate many of these systems.

The second type of disjunction occurs when readers are using the same language as the author, but applying that language in a different way. This type is especially encountered in figures of speech, which are misuses of language that occur in standardized forms. Consider the following examples: "For dogs are all around me" (Ps. 22:6), "Outside are the dogs" (Rev. 22:15), "Beware of the dogs" (Phil. 3:2), and "Do not give what is holy to dogs" (Mt. 7:6). When unsuspecting readers first comes upon these, they apply the common use, and just

46 Cf. T. Sol. 22:2–4, 1 Enoch 69:22–23, Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers 12:33–34, 11 Enoch 40:9–11.

47 Paul Achtemeier, "Jesus and the Storm-Tossed Sea," in *Jesus and the Miracle Tradition* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 10.

48 Cf. Theodore Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 55.

49 For an example of this, see *Bel and the Dragon*, 1–22.

50 Cf. Pseudo-Philo 34:1–5, where a magician influences the demons. See Paul Achtemeier, "Miracles in the New Testament and the Greco-Roman World," in *Jesus and the Miracle Tradition* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 195–196.

51 This suggestion is made by Jesus' detractors (Mk. 3:22); cf. Jub. 10:8, where a powerful demon is given control over lower demons.

52 A scientific reading, where the wind's abating had nothing to do with Jesus' command.

as quickly recognize that ‘physical dog’ does not fit the context or the plot. This is the recognition of a disjunction. We will identify these as moderate intracultural disjunctions, where author and reader are employing different aspects of the same culture to the text. The identifying characteristic of moderate intracultural disjunctions is that they are restricted to a specific speech area (e.g., figurative language, a specific character), and so are not randomly distributed.

A moderate intracultural disjunction is resolved by applying different literary conventions from the common culture, until finding one that brings coherence back to the text. For the examples involving ‘dogs,’ readers recognize that the literal use does not fit—does not bring coherence to the broader section—and so consider other literary conventions, such as figures of speech. The usual strategy is to begin with common figures, such as a simile or a metaphor, until locating one that fits the strange element into the context. Here ‘dogs’ represents hypocatastasis, where a metaphorical comparison is made, but the metaphorical referent is suppressed (in the text: “dogs surround me,” the suppressed referent is “enemies”).

A third type of disjunction occurs when an author fails at language competence, and so produces a text with unexpected and unintended disjunctions. When authors review their own texts, they do so from the position of the intended audience, in order to identify places where the text is ambiguous, where parts are not connected, or where alternate meanings are suggested. When authors miss these, they produce a text with isolated problematic elements, resulting in confusion. We will identify these as casual intracultural disjunctions, where readers have applied the same culture as the author, but the author’s language use is faulty.

The most common type of casual intracultural disjunction is unintended ambiguity. Here authors expect readers to apply a particular use of some word, but fail to provide sufficient clues to select that use. The word ‘pen’ has several uses, so that if a story opens with a character saying: “Get me a pen,” readers cannot determine if the character is asking for a writing utensil or an enclosure for an animal. Only if the next line provides further clues, such as: “I need to write a note,” is this ambiguity resolved. Most words or events, when isolated from the broader narrative, are ambiguous. Consider our example of the storm wind which, by itself, could be understood in a variety of ways. This highlights the necessity of examining a pericope from within the larger narrative. For an example of unintended ambiguity, Moisés Silva examines Phil. 1:10, which “may mean ‘to test the things that differ’ or ‘to approve the thing that excel.’”⁵³

53 Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*

The final type of disjunction occurs when the author uses his or her subjectivity to create something new, that is, something beyond that culture's horizons. This disjunction does not occur because the author is using a different convention from the common culture (moderate intracultural disjunction), but because the author has introduced something altogether new to the common culture. In the former, readers apply alternate conventions to locate and resolve the disjunction, while in the latter, no application of standard conventions can produce a satisfactory resolution. Such newness, by definition, always creates a disjunction. We will identify this as a radical intracultural disjunction.

Radical intracultural disjunctions can occur in any area of language, including a new word (neologism), the new use of a word (idiosyncratic usage), a new form within language (e.g., the first occurrence of figural narration), a new aspect of some social institution (e.g., shifts in the medical institution), a new explanation (e.g., Einstein's paradigm shift), or a new metaphor (e.g., the insect in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*). Almost all of these are seen in the New Testament, from the idiosyncratic use of words (*apostolos*, *euangelion*) to shifts in the social institutions (picking grain and healing on the Sabbath).

The identifying characteristic of a radical intracultural disjunction is that it is an isolated occurrence that is not fully resolvable by any conventional application of language. It is neither routinely found throughout the text as in the cross-cultural disjunction, nor is it part of existing culture as in the moderate intracultural disjunction. While this disjunction maintains some connection to standard language, such as a common alphabet or a standard grammatical position, it will have no connection in at least one area.⁵⁴ As the author has stepped beyond the horizons of culture to create this bit of newness, the reader will have to do the same to assimilate it. The reader does this by turning to two specialized processes.⁵⁵

The first process is redundancy. Language routinely contains redundant elements, so that each element in a paragraph remains connected to the other

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 152, fn. 36. See Silva's discussion on unintended ambiguity (*Ibid.*, 151–156).

54 Earlier we characterized this under Wittgenstein's "stage setting." Cf. Kalle Puolakka: "While linguistic history and past usages do not limit what meanings can be intended, they do determine *the clues that the speaker must give* in order to make his novel utterances interpretable for the receiver" ("Literature, Ethics, and Richard Rorty's Pragmatist Theory of Interpretation," *Philosophia* 36 [2008]: 36, accessed July 11, 2013, doi:10.1007/s11406-007-9091-7, italics added).

55 Here we address the processes of redundancy and circularity, but other processes also exist, such as the use of analogy and associative thinking; these are discussed in Chapter 3, section on Characterizing Otherness.

elements.⁵⁶ These elements, collectively, are expected to produce a coherent meaning, so that the connections place limits on the use of any of its parts. A new element—such as a neologism—is still connected to the standard language elements of its paragraph, and these connections provide both clues and limits to this elements usage.⁵⁷ As an example, let us consider a neologism within a wholly conventional sentence: “When you set the table, place a blanth with the fork and knife.” While ‘blanth’ is a neologism, it occurs in a noun position (suggesting that it is an object), is associated with the objects of fork and knife, and is part of a table setting. These associations limit the usage of blanth, so that it cannot be an elephant or a bicycle, but is expected to be some type of eating utensil.

The second process is circularity. A sentence and paragraph are about something, and that something textures all of the compositing elements. This is a version of the hermeneutic circle, where a collection of parts creates the larger whole, but the larger whole textures the use of each of the parts. Hence, once the larger whole is constructed from the parts that are known, it may be used to grasp a part that is unknown. Consider the example: “Please use a blanth when you eat, for it is inappropriate to pick up food with your fingers.” Here the larger whole is about eating, and specifically about how eating is done with utensils. Given this whole, a blanth is expected to be some form of utensil for picking up food.

It is critical to note that both redundancy and circularity use language inside the text, that is, processes that are part of the public language system. Readers do not need to turn to private authorial elements, such as authorial experiences or psychology, to understand this neologism. Authors expect readers to begin with the language system, so that resolution originates in conventional language.⁵⁸ Indeed, authors know that a neologism is a violation of normal language, and so include what they expect to be sufficient clues within their texts.

56 Cf. Silva, *Biblical Words and their Meaning*, 154.

57 Connectedness and coherence are relative evaluations of the reader. Disjunctions occur when readers feel that the non-coherence has exceeded their expectations. These expectations are tied to one's cultural background and the internal strictures created by emplotment, and are expected to result in an internal relevance to the event at hand. Cf. Grice's “cooperative principle” as manifested in his “maxim of relevance” (“Logic and Conversation,” 167, 168).

58 The notion that the conventions of language are sufficiently robust to determine meaning is called ‘conventionalism’ (see Irvin, “Author, Intentions, and Literary Meaning,” 120–122). Our position is not conventionalism, but moderate intentionalism, where conventions are used to determine meaning, including the resolution of disjunctions, until such are exhausted; then one turns to authorial materials for provisional help.

This supports our earlier conclusion, that meaning *is not accessed through the author's private experiences or private language, but through the public language of the intended audience.*

Yet these processes do not fully resolve the meaning of blanth. While blanth has certain connections within the language system, at least one aspect was formed as a subjective violation. For this reason, the language system can never fully resolve the disjunction. Readers may begin with the processes of redundancy and circularity to grasp the general 'shape' of the neologism, but must turn to processes outside of the language system to give that shape specificity. These outside processes include examining the author's oeuvre, biographical experiences, group memberships, commentary on the text, and private letters. These are always secondary and provisional in nature, as the author expected readers to begin with the text.

Finally, let us examine how these processes resolve a radical intracultural disjunction, by applying them to the first exorcism in Mark (1:23–27). While an exorcism creates a cross-cultural disjunction for the modern reader, we will approach this as the intended audience, where spirit-possession was an accepted form of demonic violence against humans.⁵⁹ At the beginning of this pericope, readers encounter "a man with an unclean spirit," so that readers invoke the common understanding of spirit-possession. The following textual statements, that the spirit spoke through him and caused him to have convulsions, are also common to possession. These elements suggest the usual first-century religious grasp of possession, with the expectation that the man is now unclean and that the spirit will not depart without an exorcism.

The confrontation between Jesus and this man immediately creates the expectation of conflict, especially as Jesus has already been characterized as God's man (Mk. 1:1, 11), as having survived the archetypal wilderness (Mk. 1:13), and as proclaiming the new age of God (Mk. 1:15). But Jewish readers also know that Jesus cannot combat this demon on his own, as he is lower on the scale of authority and power.⁶⁰ Even as 'God's man,' he is still only human—at this point

59 See Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 86–89.

60 On the 'cosmic hierarchy,' see Chapter 1, fn. 25 and text. The general Jewish scheme is that humans lack the authority and the power to command demons, though they may obtain these by accessing powerful objects (God, amulets, etc.). Some authors have found examples of 'charismatic miracle workers' who operate on their own authority (cf. Graham Twelftree, "In the Name of Jesus: A Conversation with Critics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 17 [2008]: 170–188; Howard Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Society for New Testament Studies 55 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986]). However, a close examination reveals that these examples are either much later (Simeon

in the narrative. Hence, devoutly religious Jewish readers expect Jesus to turn to God in prayer. As Paul Achtemeier notes: “Unlike miracle stories in Hellenistic sources, the miracles reported in the Jewish tradition were effected by means of prayer.”⁶¹ But not all readers are devout, so that marginally religious Jewish readers might expect Jesus to turn to powerful amulets, spells, and roots.⁶² A rare reader might even wonder if Jesus will pray to more powerful demons, in order to gain control over this ‘little’ demon.⁶³ But Jesus does something totally unexpected: he orders the spirit to “be muzzled” and to “come out” on his own authority, and the spirit obeys. This creates a disjunction, where Jesus’ actions do not fit any model of exorcism.

So, how are readers to understand this newness? Our model readers begin with the assumption that this disjunction is generally resolvable within the language and culture of the intended audience.⁶⁴ They begin with the pericope itself, by constructing the whole and using this to texture the unknown bits (circularity). This pericope is framed by the word ‘authority,’ suggesting that the whole story is about an attribution of authority to Jesus. In first-century usage, authority (*exousia*) indicates the right to act or command.⁶⁵ Its connection to the exorcism is made clear by its second occurrence: “A new teaching—with authority! He commands even (*kai*) the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

Hence, this pericope is designed to suggest that Jesus has the right to command demons, not because he is using a secret amulet to overpower the demon (*dynamis*), but because of his unique position in the cosmic hierarchy (*exousia*). Such is tantamount to stating that Jesus is not simply human, but has the authority that is afforded to higher-level spirits—though without indicat-

ben Yose), non-Jewish in culture (*Life of Apollonius*), or from satirical texts (Lucian of Samosata), and thus do not negate our claim. Cf. Eric Douglass, *Reading the Bible Ethically* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 230 fn. 58, 235 fn. 65.

61 Achtemeier, “Miracles in the New Testament,” 210. Cf. Jub. 10:1–4, 1QapGen 21. John Meier writes: “What is central is the holy man’s prayer to God ... the emphasis usually remains on the miraculous power of their prayer to God” (*A Marginal Jew*, vol. 2 [New York: Doubleday, 1994], 588).

62 Cf. T. Sol. 1:5–8, 22:2–15; Joseph Ant. 8.46–47; Josephus War 7.181–185; Jub. 10:10–13.

63 This was the scribes’ explanation (Mk. 3:22). On sacrificing to the demons, cf. Pseudo-Philo 34:1–5.

64 This means that readers begin with the assumption that the disjunction is an epistemological problem, and so is theoretically resolvable by invoking the appropriate system; readers only assume that it is an ontological disjunction—which is by definition unresolvable within any system—after excluding the former.

65 Cf. Richard Dillon, “As One Having Authority (Mark 1:22): The Controversial Distinction of Jesus’ Teaching,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (January 1995): 92–113, esp. 97. See my work on *exousia* (Douglass, *Reading the Bible Ethically*, 230–242).

ing how this can be. Jesus orders the spirit from a position of higher spiritual authority, and for this reason his command is effective.

Next our readers turn to the mechanism of redundancy. In particular, they note the spirit's speech, where it asks: "Have you come to destroy us?" This suggests that Jesus has the power to destroy (*apollymi*) the demon, though demons are usually cast out, bound, or sealed (e.g., Tob. 8:3, Jub. 10:7–14).⁶⁶ This is even the case in the final judgment (cf. Rev. 20:10, 1 Enoch 10:12–13; 21:10, 55:3–4, 69:28). Hence, the demon's comment appears to suggest the complete power of Jesus over the demonic realm (note the plural "us"), and, given Jesus' central proclamation of the kingdom of God, that the destruction is of their kingdom (metonymy), so that their authority in the human realm is broken and being replaced.⁶⁷

The spirit's next statement is that Jesus is "the Holy One of God." While this title indicates those who "were in a specially close relation to God,"⁶⁸ and even identifies Jesus as "the holiest of God's elect,"⁶⁹ its function here is more specific. Readers from this culture would want to know the source of Jesus' authority. Readers might wonder if Jesus had secretly accessed some external power, such as an amulet or spell that was strong enough to remove demons, and so be functioning as an exceptionally powerful magician. This title functions to eliminate all such speculation. Jesus' authority comes from some attachment to God's power as part of God's mission.

The spirit's comments function as redundant materials on the issue of Jesus ordering spirits 'on his own.' These suggest that Jesus' commands are underlain by an intrinsic authority, and that the source of this authority and power are to be found in God. The demon obeys Jesus' order, for the demon sees Jesus for who he is, despite the fact that humans do not. This meaning is supported by earlier aspects of the narrative, as where the Spirit descends upon Jesus (Mk. 1:10), suggesting the source of his authority.⁷⁰

However, these considerations do not fully resolve the disjunction. This is typical of radical intracultural disjunctions, as these bits of newness were

66 Some have suggested that *apollymi* (destroy) indicates the exorcism itself, as in Robert Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary for His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 76. But this seems inadequate ("destroy us"). The word is used for destruction and killing, but here employs metonymy to indicate the 'eternal ruin' of their kingdom.

67 For background, cf. Jub. 10:7–14, 48:9–12.

68 R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 104.

69 Collins, *Mark*, 170.

70 It is worth noting that the demon does not say: "I see the Spirit in you," as if the Spirit were a separate being inside the human Jesus, but addresses him as "Jesus of Nazareth".

formed beyond the horizons of culture. Once the specialized processes of redundancy and circularity are exhausted, readers may turn to materials external to the text, such as biographical events, speeches, or commentary. The provisional use of such materials may further texture these subjective bits. For the example at hand, readers might turn to Jesus' speeches in other texts. In Mt. 12:28 and Lk. 11:20, Jesus says that he performs exorcisms "by the Spirit (finger) of God." This nicely fits with the suggestion that Jesus' authority is intrinsic, so that he does not need amulets or spells.

Readers might also turn to the virgin birth narratives (Mt. 1:18–20, Lk. 1:26–35). In first-century culture, virgin births were used to posit a divine contribution to an otherwise ordinary human, and so as a means of explaining the miraculous powers of these humans (e.g., Plato, Augustus Caesar, Alexander the Great, Moses [in Philo]).⁷¹ This nicely fits with the suggestion that Jesus is not simply human, but has something like 'a divine aspect' which gives him both higher authority and special power.

6 Summary

This chapter laid out our model for narrative communication. Beginning with the author, we suggest that writing is an intentional act, and so is designed to say something to an audience in an understandable way. This means that narratives are about communication, and so we turned to the conditions under which communication occurs. Using the notion of a social contract, the central condition is that both parties implicitly agree to use the same language and culture. For the author, this means creating an implied authorA who uses the language of the intended audience, while the reader creates an ideal reader who is modeled on the same. These constructs meet at the level of the text, where both are using the same language and culture.

Other conditions for communication are that the author and reader are competent in the language of the intended audience, that both use language in a fully conventional fashion, and that neither engages in resistance to those conventions. For readers, these conditions suggest that reading is a conventional process, where public language governs the way in which reading-as-communication occurs, so that there is no need to turn to the author's private language or the author's biography for help.

⁷¹ See Origin, *Against Celsus* 1.37, where the notion of 'divine contribution' is explicitly expressed.

However, there are two problems with this fully conventional scheme. First, the standard conditions for communication may have been mishandled, resulting in disjunctions. The cross-cultural disjunction occurs when the author and reader are applying different cultures, or when either has an inadequate characterization of the intended audience. The casual intracultural disjunction occurs when authors lack competence in their use of language.

The second problem is that authors may choose to employ language in non-standard ways, resulting in other types of disjunctions. The moderate intracultural disjunction occurs when authors have used language in an unexpected way (e.g., a figure of speech), and this was missed by the reader. Such disjunctions are still part of public language and are generally resolvable within the culture of the intended audience. The radical intracultural disjunction occurs when the author has crossed cultural boundaries in the creation of the new. For readers to assimilate these subjective bits, they must refuse to act like the intended audience, that is, they do not force these bits into standard institutions. Instead, readers turn to specialized mechanisms in the language system, such as circularity and redundancy, which allow for subjective elements to be reduced to general understanding. Only when these processes are exhausted do readers reach outside of the public language system for help.

Finally, this chapter examined how the communication model may be used to understand the workings of other interpretive methods. Indeed, it is a useful way of understanding the inner workings of most methods, as it reveals the conditions for communication, what counts as communication, how communication occurs, and where communication breaks down.

Locating the Text

In this chapter we turn to issues of method. In the past, methods were designed to reveal objective truth, so as to eliminate the reader's subjective responses and idiosyncratic results. As Wallace Martin writes: "Critics justify their explanations by referring to the text and using accepted interpretive procedures so that they will not be accused of subjectivity in a profession that prizes scientific, objective methods."¹ However, methods do not remove subjective bias, but only move it back one step. Now the subjective bias is at the level of the assumptions that were used to create the method. For this reason, methods do not reveal textual truth, but only the truth that the method was designed to reveal.

As already noted, all methods are rooted in assumptions. These assumptions are often hidden (mystification), so that the method's steps appear natural. But this is an illusion. There is no natural way of reading, but only the various ways one is taught. Methods are developed with a set of assumptions about the world, so that each creates a perspectival bias. For this reason, *methods do not have the design to reveal the objective truth of a text*. Hence, they cannot create a 'clearing' where things appear as they actually are, untouched and unsullied by human bias—as Heidegger suggested.² The reading experience is always mediated through the assumptions of method. Richard Rorty puts it nicely:

The thought that a commentator has discovered what a text is really doing—for example, that it is *really* demystifying an ideological construct, or *really* deconstructing the hierarchical oppositions of western metaphysics, rather than merely being capable of being *used* for these purposes—is, for us pragmatists, just more occultism.³

Furthermore, while a method is designed to achieve certain ends, its design may be faulty, so that its steps are unable to achieve those ends. For example, readers desiring history may adopt a flawed historical method (say, a Hegelian

¹ Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 158.

² Cf. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of a Work of Art," in *Martin Heidegger—Basic Writings*, ed. David Krell (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), 149–187.

³ Richard Rorty, "The Pragmatist's Progress," in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1992), 102–103, author's italics.

method), and to this degree will not obtain the kind of history they desire. Similarly, in the last chapter we examined Hirsch's intentionalism, and concluded that his method was based on a faulty understanding of communication. His method's steps cannot achieve his method's goals. Thus, we must separate the evaluation of a method's assumptions from an evaluation of its steps. With this understanding, we can now state the relation of method to its assumptions and steps: a method is a collection of semi-integrated steps that are designed to reproduce its underlying assumptions from the raw elements of the text, where the underlying assumptions are the truth that the method is designed to reveal, while the steps are an approximate means of achieving that end.

With this understanding of method, we can pose the central question for this section: do some methods produce a better description of the text than others? From the author's perspective—if we could talk to him or her—some methods do not, as they fail to account for specific textual elements. The authors of the New Testament would so evaluate a method that excludes miracle stories (Jefferson Bible). Authors would similarly evaluate methods that ignore the language, literary forms, or culture of their target audiences.

But in this section, we will focus on the reader's evaluation of method, and whether certain ones produce a better description from the reader's perspective. First, we must define the reader's notion of 'better description,' and then turn to how methods achieve this. The concept of better description is tied to the reader's desire, as this determines the content of that description. If the initial desire is to find fragmentation, then only a method that produces fragmentation is evaluated as producing a better description. It does not matter if the author and other readers evaluate the text as coherent, for this criterion is not about the text but the individual reader's desire. For this reader, certain methods will do a better job of creating fragmentation than others, so that he or she will grade deconstruction as providing a better description of the text than, say, New Criticism.

Indeed, this relation can be predicted. Methods that are designed to produce the same object as the reader's desire will always produce a better description. Narrative Criticism is not designed to produce historical facts, and so will always seem inadequate to the historical critic. Feminist Criticism is not designed to produce Kantian 'free beauty,' and so will always seem inadequate to the neo-Kantians. Deconstruction is not designed to produce the voice of the author, and so will always seem inadequate to interpreters who use our method.

In short, each school of interpretation promotes a different reader desire, along with its own method for meeting that desire. This connection dictates that each method creates steps to promote specific values, as well as outlines the violations of those values. As Geoffrey Harpham summarizes: "Any partic-

ular conception of the act of criticism includes some specification of a proper procedure or methodology—a critical duty—and some account of the transgression.”⁴ As desires are generally assumed to be equal, readers are left in a hermeneutic aporia of competing desires, along with their attached methods, duties, values, and violations.

We have suggested a way out of this aporia by turning to ethics, and so our method begins with the assumption that the relation between authors and readers is ethical in nature. Here the ethical imperative is to show respect to all voices in the world, where the virtue is to reconstruct that voice as best possible, and the violation is to manipulate that voice deliberately. Given this assumption, the desire to hear the author’s voice is given priority over other readerly interests, such as to finding pleasure, fragmentation, romance, culture, history, or ideology—though this is only for the initial reading.

Hence, our readers privilege the desire to hear the author’s voice, and match this to steps that are based on our understanding of writing (Chapter 1) and communication (Chapter 2). As writing is an intentional act, our readers begin with the expectation for a coherent text that is written in a particular public language. This means that any method promoting fragmentation or reading the text in a different culture does not produce a better description. An example of the former would be a method that breaks the text into separate pericopae, which are then studied independently of the whole (traditional form criticism). An example of the latter would be reading the New Testament from the perspective of modern Western science.

1 An Overview

Before turning to the issue of culture, it is appropriate to provide an overview of the larger method, so that our readers can see how each subsequent chapter fits. This method opens with the recognition that narratives function as mental simulations of events. This is even the case in historical narratives, for the events they portray are not happening during the time of reading—they are simulations of past events. The significance of simulations is that they do not involve the actual self and do not occur in the real world, but use a simulated

4 Geoffrey Harpham, “Ethics and Literary Criticism,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 381–382.

self in a simulated world. Indeed, this process requires two readers: an actual-self holding the book in the real world, and a reading-self experiencing the events in the storyworld.

While this simulation is ostensibly rooted in the text's words, the use of those words is located by the culture applied to the text. As our model readers are interested in communication, they employ the culture of the intended audience. We will use a temporal metaphor to describe this, where readers recognize that the text is located in 'the then,' while readers live in 'the now' (see diagram below). The readers' earliest step is to locate the text, which means identifying and characterizing the intended audience, focusing on their worldview and social institutions. Readers then apply this worldview to their reading-self—the self who experiences the storyworld—so that reading proceeds with this audience's worldview. From this point on, the reading-self of the Gospels believes that winds are caused by spiritual beings, and can be controlled by using amulets, spells, and prayers. In short, this modified reading-self functions as an ideal reader in the communication process.

Next, readers use the opening words of the text to create the storyworld. But more than simply creating a simulation, the reading-self enters that simulation as an actual world. Initially the reading-self stands on the inside edge of this world, watching the events unfold from an uninvolved perspective. But early in this process, the reading-self usually becomes connected to a particular character through the process of identification. At such a juncture, the reading-self becomes an involved participant in the narrative's events, responding with that character's emotions, goals, and interests. In this way, narratives do not traffic in propositional meanings, but in event-based, experienced meanings. Indeed, the reading-self experiences the events prior to any meaning being constructed. Only secondarily do they abstract these experiences to meaning bits, and string these bits into larger themes that run through the narrative. At this point, our model reader has located, entered, and experienced the events of the simulation, as contoured by the narrative's elements. We will identify these steps as: locating the text, entering the narrative, and experiencing the event.

Finally, the reading-self constructs the meanings of the text. This occurs through narrative argumentation, where the themes are placed in conflict with each other, and the reading-self is guided through this conflict by the narrative's evaluative statements, values, foregrounding, and selective emphases. These constructed meanings may be placed in propositional form, but their origin is in experienced event, so that the propositional form is only an approximation. We will identify this step as 'constructing story-meaning.'

Authors design story-meaning for the culture of the intended audience—a world created and experienced by the reading-self in 'the then.' They did not

design it for some unimaginable future culture, which is the world of the actual-self in ‘the now.’ More specifically, the New Testament’s meanings were created for the symbolic universe and social institutions of a first-century audience, and not those of any other culture or time. For those meanings to function in the same way, and so have the same effect on the modern reader, they must be translated. This is done by abstracting the original meanings to a more elemental shape, to the point where the categories for meaning in ‘the then’ align with the categories for meaning in ‘the now.’ We will identify this step as ‘translating story-meaning.’

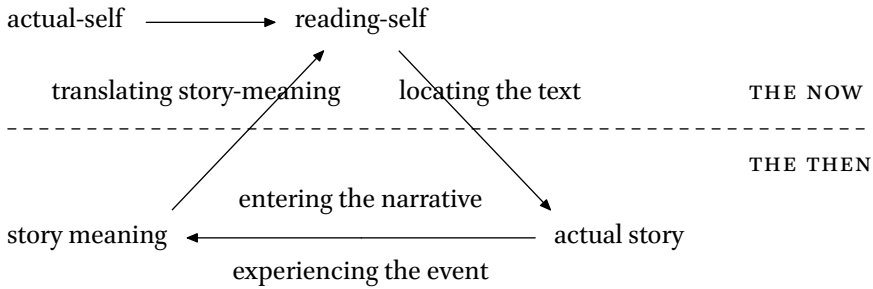
For example, both first-century Jewish culture and modern Western culture have the word ‘Samaritan.’ But at the level of each culture’s symbolic universe, ‘Samaritan’ exists in different categories, and so has a different meaning and function. For the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the reader abstracts the first-century use to a more elemental shape, from ‘Samaritan’ to ‘despised foreigner.’⁵ As both cultures have the category of ‘despised foreigner,’ this translated meaning now functions in the modern culture as it did for the intended audience. The modern reader no longer understands the parable with anachronistic meaning (“I should act like the nice Samaritan”), but with a more original meaning (“Even hated foreigners are better at doing God’s work than I am”).

At the conclusion of reading, the reading-self engages in dialogue with the actual-self. All readers have experienced such a dialogue, usually at the end of a controversial text, where the reader ‘argues with himself or herself.’ Some have even used the metaphor of the text ‘questioning the reader.’ These metaphors describe the experience of coming to terms with the text, where the actual-self evaluates the validity of the reading-self’s experiences. The protagonist in *The Awakening* (Kate Chopin) found the solution to her troubles in suicide, but—the actual-self asks—is that ever a solution I should consider?

This is the beginning of a broader conversation, in which the reader engages the text with a variety of other interpretive methods. Each subsequent reading, whether womanist, theological, post-colonial, or liberation, shapes a different reading-self, with meanings specific to that method. These many reading-selves, along with the moderator (the actual-self), fill the seats at the grand table of interpretation, with the purpose of engaging in robust dialogue. It is at this gathering of the many, with their many voices, positions, and critiques, that interpretation in its finest form occurs.

5 Cf. Philip Esler, “Jesus and the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict,” in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce Malina, and Gerd Theissen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 187.

At this point, we can produce a diagram that outlines these steps:



2 A Two-Self Reading System

Readers of narrative routinely have the experience of being inside the story-world, only to put the book down and find themselves in their living room with the book on their lap. Readers find themselves inside a simulation that feels real, and yet, somehow, recognize that it is not real. Readers cry at the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, and yet never call for an ambulance. This suggests that two selves exist when reading, with each having a different position and perspective on the storyworld.

Others have also noted this awareness of two selves. Keith Oatley writes: "Many great works of literature derive their effects from enabling several modes to come into play, including those of retaining one's identity outside the text and losing it within the text."⁶ Wolfgang Iser writes: "Thus, in reading there are these two levels—the alien 'me' and the real, virtual 'me'—which are never completely cut off from each other."⁷ Walker Gibson applies this to commercials: "Recognition of a violent disparity between ourself as mock reader and ourself as actual person acting in a real world is the process by which we keep our money in our pockets."⁸ Wayne Booth, with a bit of wit, addresses the dis-

6 Keith Oatley, "A Taxonomy of the Emotions of Literary Response and a Theory of Identification in Fictional Narrative," *Poetics* 23 (1994): 55.

7 Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 67. Similarly Werner Wolf, as summarized by Manfred Jahn: "Wolf convincingly argues that it is essential to the aesthetic illusion that the reader engages in various processes of mental imagery and yet remains aware of where s/he is and that s/he is reading a book." ("Windows of Focalization: Deconstructing a Narratological Concept," *Style* 30, no. 2 [Summer 1996]: 259).

8 Walker Gibson, "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers," in *Reader-Response Criti-*

inction between “myself as reader and the often very different self who goes about paying bills, repairing leaky faucets, and failing in generosity and wisdom.”⁹

The necessity for a distinctive reading-self is rooted in two issues. The first is tied to the function of mental simulations. Humans developed the capacity for simulations in order to test their choices: they run a simulation of each possible way forward, to determine which is most likely to succeed.¹⁰ These simulations needed to seem real, so as to produce valid results, but be evaluated as not real, so that they are not automatically acted upon. This capacity was then adapted to storytelling, with the retention of these characteristics of ‘seeming real,’ and yet evaluated as ‘not real.’ This explains why readers respond to Romeo and Juliet as described.

Now, if simulations arose for counterfactual testing, then they also require a counterfactual subject *who is shaped by the events internal to the simulation*. When ancient hunters needed to know how a woolly mammoth would respond, they imagined themselves as the animal, using its prior behavior to program their responses. The most valid simulation would be one where every known fact of a mammoth’s behavior was used to overwrite the counterfactual-self, so that this self functioned as a cipher for the mammoth. To the degree that the counterfactual-self held onto its configuration as a human, or resisted the inputs of ‘mammoth behavior,’ the simulation could never deliver reliable results.

In narratives, the reading-self functions as that counterfactual-self and so follows the simulation with precision. If the actual-self intrudes with his or her own background—including a disbelief in, say, miracles—then the simulation runs off track. Indeed, the actual-self must be bracketed, so as not to inject his or her reality into the simulation. Kai Mikkonen writes: “As readers or viewers of fiction, however, we are supposed to simultaneously inhabit two different worlds with different ontological statuses, not just move from one world to the other.”¹¹

cism: *From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. J. Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 2.

9 Wayne Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 137–138. In another book, Booth states that readers occupy three roles: the person in the storyworld who “pretends that this story is happening,” the person who knows this this world is “unreal ... artificial,” and the person who is outside of the storyworld (*The Company We Keep* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988], 125).

10 On the original function of mental simulations, see Chapter 4.

11 Kai Mikkonen, “Can Fiction Become Fact? The Fiction-to-Fact Transition in Recent Theories of Fiction,” *Style* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 307. We will discuss the ontological assump-

We may examine those two worlds using Kendall Walton's example of the horror film *The Blob*.¹² He notes that the person watching this film develops the physiological effects of various emotions, as if in response to a real situation. Now, if the actual-self were in the simulation (if there were no reading-self), then the actual-self could evaluate the situation as either real or imagined.¹³ In the former case, the blob is perceived as dangerous, and the audience runs out of the theater screaming. In the latter, the blob is evaluated as imaginary, and the audience laughs at the reactions of the characters, evaluating them as naïve and ignorant. But this is not the way viewers respond: their pulses quicken and their blood pressures rise, even though each viewer "knows perfectly well that the slime is not real and that he is in no danger."¹⁴ This is explained by having two readers in two worlds: a reading-self in the simulation who knows that he or she is in imminent danger, and an actual-self in the theater who knows that it is only pretend.

The second issue is tied to the problem of serious meaning. Narratives do not function simply as entertainment, but create experiences that leave a residue in readers. This is a central assumption in Marxist, feminist, and ethical criticism, where interpreters recognize the shaping capacity of narrative experiences. Martha Nussbaum notes how Nazi literature shaped the values of the German populace by portraying Jews "as either totally nonhuman (insects or vermin, in many children's books), or else as evil and threatening, parasites who prey on the social fabric of Germany."¹⁵ Indeed, narratives do not simply show specific values and meanings, but validate them in the events of the narrative, so that they are *experienced as true* inside the simulation.

Now, if the actual-self were in the simulation (if there were no reading-self), then these experiences would be directly written into memory and have a near-automatic shaping influence on readers—a frightening thought that does

tions for each in Chapter 6, by applying possible worlds theory to the stance of each 'self' In Chapter 7, we will discuss the implications of this for evaluating the validity of narrative meaning.

12 Kendall Walton, "Fearing Fictionally," in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 177–184.

13 A third possibility is for the actual-self to be in a simulated event with real components. This occurs when the armed forces participate in a war game. The participants know that the event is a simulation (the bullets are not 'real'), and yet continue to act as if the event were real (hide behind real barriers). Similarly, with a person walking through 'foreign countries' at certain amusement parks. Metafiction capitalizes on this effect.

14 Ibid.

15 Martha Nussbaum, "Exactly and Responsibly: A Defense of Ethical Criticism," *Philosophy and Literature* 22, no. 2 (1998): 354, author's parenthesis.

not mirror our experience.¹⁶ Instead, only the reading-self participates in the simulation, so that the actual-self is never directly affected. It is this separation between the two that allows the actual-self to mount an evaluative response to the reading-self's experiences. This is the basis for the reader's experience of 'arguing with one's self' over the issues in Nazi literature: the actual-self is debating the validity of the reading-self's experiences.

Indeed, it is this separation that allows the actual-self to create a resistant reader, that is, to shape a reading-self who does not follow the text. In a resistant reading, the reader outside of the text (actual-self) recognizes that the reader inside the text (reading-self) is taking on the role of, say, an androcentric protagonist. This evaluation does not come from the text, for the text presents the androcentric worldview as natural, and even validates that role with positive outcomes. Neither does it come from the reading-self, who experiences the text as a seemingly real simulation. It comes from the actual-self who is always outside of the simulation, evaluating the reading-self's experiences in the simulation. This is one place where the two selves can even be glimpsed.

The two selves can also be glimpsed when readers attempt to resolve a disjunction. Imagine a text where the Juliet drinks the poison that killed Romeo, and then skips merrily away. At this point, readers step back and try to make sense of the text. This metaphor, of 'stepping back,' is particularly apt: the reader's attention shifts from the reading-self who is experiencing the text, to the actual-self who is reasoning through the problem. Once the problem is resolved, the reader's attention again returns to the reading-self, and so to experiencing the events in the simulation. Each self appears to exist in a different space, with different ontological assumptions about the storyworld.

However, this notion of two selves is somewhat counterintuitive, as readers are not routinely aware of both, and never see the two simultaneously. This is because humans only have a single attentional focus, so that they are only aware of one at any moment. Research in mental processing suggests that humans generally handle one attentional task at a time. As LaBerge and Samuels write: "The number of existing codes of any kind that can be activated by attention at a given moment is sharply limited, probably to one."¹⁷ Scientists

16 If the actual-self is automatically shaped by experiences in the simulation, then another version of the actual-self must be stored somewhere in memory, so that readers can return to their pre-reading self at the end of reading.

17 David LaBerge and S. Jay Samuels, "Toward a Theory of Automatic Information Processing in Reading," *Cognitive Psychology*, 6 (1974): 295. Howard Gardner offers a variation, by suggesting that a person can only engage in one conscious task for each intelligence: "We often find it very difficult to converse while we are working on a crossword puzzle or listen-

refer to this as the ‘bottleneck problem,’ where attentional tasks are processed sequentially and not concurrently: “Theories of dual-task performance have suggested that the interference between two tasks results from a processing mechanism that is limited to processing only one task at a time.”¹⁸ This still leaves room for the simultaneous running of automatic tasks, as these require no attention on the part of the reader. As John Harker writes: “However, other processing can go on simultaneously if that processing requires no attentional capacity, which is to say, if it is automatic.”¹⁹ This would be like walking and talking at the same time, where the automatic task is walking, and can proceed simultaneously with the attentional task of talking. But if this person trips over an obstacle, the attentional focus will shift to the walking component, and conversation will cease.

Thus, the reading-self and actual-self only run simultaneously when one of the programs is performing an automatic task. When the attentional focus is on the reading-self in experiencing the storyworld, the actual-self can only run automatic tasks, such as turning the pages of the book. But when a disjunction occurs, the attentional focus shifts to the actual-self in reasoning through the problem, and the reading-self stops experiencing the storyworld. These two never simultaneously have the attentional focus, so creating the illusion of a single-self reading system. We might compare this to a person listening to two conversations: “On many occasions, people appear to be giving attention to two or more things at the same time, when, in fact, they are shifting attention rapidly between the tasks.”²⁰ In a similar vein, Iser writes that the reader “oscillates between” involvement in the illusion that the reader has created out of the text and the observation of that illusion.²¹ In our terminology, the attentional

ing to a song with words; in these cases, two manifestations of linguistic intelligence are competing” (*Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* [New York: Basic Books, 1999], 40). Research by Mei-Ching Lien, Eric Ruthruff, and James Johnston can be read to support Gardner’s hypothesis (“Attentional Limitations in Doing Two Tasks at Once: A Search for Exceptions,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 15, no. 2 [April 2006]: 89–93).

- 18 André Szameitat, Torsten Schubert, Karsten Müller, and D. von Cramon, “Localization of Executive Functions in Dual-Task Performance with fMRI,” *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 14.8 (Nov 15, 2002): 1185, accessed June 10, 2015, doi: 10.1162/089892902760807195.
- 19 W. John Harker, “Toward a Defensible Psychology of Literary Interpretation,” in *Empirical Approaches to Literature and Aesthetics*, ed. R. Kreuz and M. MacNealy (Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1996), 647. Similarly LaBerg and Samuels, “Toward a Theory,” 295.
- 20 LaBerg and Samuels, “Toward a Theory,” 295. Also cf. Szameitat, et. al., “Localization of Executive Functions,” 1158, 1194.
- 21 Iser, “The Reading Process,” 61; cf. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 128, 133–134. Note that Iser’s application is different.

focus shifts rapidly between the actual-self and the reading-self, so explaining the dual functions of experiencing the simulation and evaluating the simulation.

To this point, we have examined the necessity for a two-reader system, the functions of each, and the supporting neuroscience. This leaves us with two issues: how is the reading-self related to the actual-self, and how do both fit into our communication model? To begin, the reading-self is not created *ex nihilo*, as if a blank slate without any knowledge of the world. If this were the case, then all understanding of the storyworld would have to be constructed from inside the storyworld, including all social institutions. Rather, the reading-self begins as a projection of the actual-self, and so engages the text with a complete cultural background. When a gap appears in the text, the reading-self simply fills it from this cultural background. As David Lewis writes: “Most of us are content to read a fiction against a background of well-known fact, ‘reading into’ the fiction content that is not there.”²² Thus, the reading-self’s original configuration is that of the actual-self, and the reading-self applies these linguistic, literary, and social institutions to the text. The reading-self does not reach outside of this configuration to create new uses for the words, or to fill the gaps with creative innovations. As Lewis notes, readers do not read the Sherlock Holmes’ stories “as if they might for all we know be taking place at a world where three-nostrilled detectives pursue purple gnomes.”²³

Since the reading-self begins with this original configuration, and since authors know this, authors do not need to reproduce these cultural elements in the text. They expect readers to fill these gaps from their cultural treasury. This is why authors do not describe every detail of every object, or explain why Jesus goes to the synagogue on the Sabbath, or offer instructions on how to understand a parable. Rather, authors focus on elements of the storyworld that contradict the original configuration—violations of culture, as in the radical intracultural disjunction—and here supply supplementary materials for understanding.

For example, in Luke 5:20–26, the reader encounters Jesus’ first declaration of forgiveness to a person. As this represents a cultural violation, Luke sur-

22 David Lewis, “Truth in Fiction,” in *Philosophy of Literature: Contemporary and Classic Readings*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 123. Ruth Ronen notes the assumption: “The philosophical definition of possible worlds assumes that each world is presented by a complete set of propositions and not a partial world represented by those propositions explicitly asserted” (*Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 65).

23 Lewis, “Truth in Fiction,” 124.

rounds the text with considerable supplementary material: a question probing this act's legitimacy ("Who can forgive sins but God alone"), the standard evaluation of that act ("speaking blasphemies"), a defense of that act ("the Son of Man has authority"), and an attempt to validate the act ("But so that you may know ... I say to you, stand up"). This is very different from the preceding verse about praying (Lk. 5:16) where no supplementary information is given. Praying is a standard cultural action and needs no explanatory material. Indeed, this is even different from the second place where Jesus declares forgiveness (Lk. 7:48–49), as the violation had already been explained.

One sees the same strategy in the first chapter of Mark, where pericopae with cultural violations, such as Jesus' baptism (Mk. 1:9–12) and Jesus' first exorcism (Mk. 1:21–27), are filled with supplementary materials, while the common actions of calling disciples (Mk. 1:16–20) and prayer (Mk. 1:35–39) are not. When such violations are encountered, the original configuration is overwritten with these new elements, so that a modified reading-self emerges. At this point the reading-self is functioning as our implied reader. This reader does not respond to events with all the possible responses of a person from that culture (ideal reader), but only with those selected by the text.

While our discussion provides a model for incorporating violations in the narrative world, this is quite different from how people act in the real world. When faced with a cultural violation, people do not simply accept these. No one in the real world believes that a person might wake up as an insect after reading *The Metamorphosis*, but readers do so with ease in the narrative world. The reason for this near automatic acceptance is rooted in the construction of mental simulations. For simulations to offer valid results, the reading-self is designed to accept overwriting by the simulation. To put this in the language of psychology, the reading-self lacks an executive function—a capacity to choose on its own—and so is automatically overwritten by each line of the narrative.²⁴ This is a central characteristic of the reading-self, and explains why it accepts cultural violations without question.

At this point we may summarize the two-self reading process with the following statements: (1) the reading-self is a projection of the actual-self, and so begins with the original configuration of the actual-self; (2) for communication to occur, the reading-self is initially overwritten with the culture of the intended audience, and so functions as an ideal reader; (3) as the reading-self is designed without an executive function, it is overwritten by each line of the narrative; this shapes the reading-self into an implied reader; (4) the reading-self

24 We address exceptions to this in Chapter 4, under resistant readings.

experiences the narrative as a realistic mental simulation; and (5) the conclusions reached by the reading-self are designed for the simulation, and not necessarily for any other possible world.

This last point reveals a central issue for readers. There is a tendency to accept narrative experiences as valid, as they occur in a seemingly real simulation. But these experiences are, by definition, contrived by the author. Even in nonfiction, the author uses simplified characters, makes evaluative comments, and posits unknowable intentions. Consider Hayden White's evaluation on writing history:

The events (in a history) are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like—in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play.²⁵

Because of this, storyworld meanings are only valid in the simulation (for the reading-self), and not necessarily in the real world (for the actual-self). The actual-self must evaluate the validity of storyworld meanings, using some set of criteria, before accepting it. The actual-self begins this process by understanding how the reading-self formulated those meanings, that is, how the reading-self was shaped by his or her experiences in the simulation. This is possible because the actual-self knows exactly where the reading-self began: the reading-self was modeled on the actual-self. From this original configuration, one can retrace the reading-self's transformations through the events of the narrative, as encoded in memory. One can understand how and why these transformations occurred, and so the experiences upon which story-meaning was based. But understanding is not acceptance. As Booth puts it: "We have allowed ourselves to become a 'mock reader' whom we cannot respect ... the beliefs which we were temporarily manipulated into accepting cannot be defended."²⁶ The point of narratives as mental simulations was always to test possible courses of action, not to create unflinching acceptance.

25 Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1715–1716, my parenthesis. White concludes that history is a "fiction-making operation" (*Ibid.*). Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 382.

26 Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 139.

3 Locating the Text

The first step in reading is locating the text that one reads. The marks on the page are before the reader, and the physical marks do not change from culture to culture. For some, this suggests that meaning does not change, so that a natural, plain, or literal reading of the text delivers the same meaning from age to age. However, even the relatively recent Sherlock Holmes novels are full of archaic usages, such as these lines from the early 1900s: "He can lag us over this stone" and "Oberstein had a short life-preserver."²⁷ The point is that a plain reading of the text does not deliver the same meaning from cultural moment to cultural moment.

For other interpreters, this constant shifting suggests that the marks have no shaping power, as if texts were radically open. This is also demonstrably wrong. Almost everyone within a particular speech community can agree on the general characteristics of a narrative, as to its alphabet, language, characters, plot, conflicts, figures of speech, and genre.²⁸ Rather, this shifting means that each speech community creates a different narrative out of the marks. The narrative simulation is not created by the physical marks on the page, but by readers who assign cultural meanings to those marks. Thus, the central issue is determining which culture to use in reading. Given our readers' desire to hear the author's voice, and our communication model for how this occurs, our readers locate the text in the culture of the intended audience, and from this position create the simulation.

This brings us to the topic of culture itself, that is, what culture is and how it functions. Definitions of culture are easy to come by, but remarkably difficult to evaluate. As one article notes: "Almost anything human could be, and at some point has been, used as the basis for a definition of culture."²⁹ We begin with the basic notion that culture deals with the way humans attach meaning to objects and actions. As Marshall Sahlins notes: "In all its dimensions, including the social and the material, human existence is symbolically constituted,

27 From *The Adventures of Mazarin Stone*, where 'lag' means 'to send to prison;' from *The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans*, where 'life-preserver' is a heavy walking stick.

28 Most arguments about 'radical openness' either use very short sections or examples that are highly allusive/connotative. Monroe Beardsley evaluates this claim and concludes that "radically indeterminate poems are not all that easy to come by" ("The Authority of the Text," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992], 31).

29 Paul Bohannan, "Rethinking Culture: A Project for Current Anthropologists," *Current Anthropology* 14, no. 4 (Oct 1973): 358. For a recent history and summary, see Vincent Pecora, "Culture as Theater/Culture as Belief," *Criticism* 49, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 505-534.

which is to say, culturally ordered.”³⁰ Similarly, Bruce Malina states that culture is “an organized system of symbols by which persons, things, and events are endowed with rather specific and socially shared meanings, feelings, and values.”³¹

For this study, we will define culture as a semi-integrated set of group memories, which are locally specific, and designed to attach meaning to practices and objects.³² As *group memories*, culture represents a tradition that is passed down and socially inculcated (socialization) from generation to generation. As *semi-integrated*, culture has sufficient unity for coordination, and sufficient diversity for adaptiveness, despite the existence of internal contradictions. As *locally specific*, culture has manifestations that can be characterized for any particular moment, with definable shifts from past and future moments. As *attaching symbolic meaning*, culture does not grasp objects and practices as neutral—as if they had either no meaning or a natural meaning—but from within a symbolic universe that assigns meanings and values, and orders these into maps and institutions. Even when an element is dictated by genetics and is universal in nature, the meaning and value of that element is symbolically determined and institutionally located.³³

This definition suggests that many disciplines are involved in characterizing a group’s culture, including studies from history, sociology, and anthropology. Dvorak notes that models should include items such as “worldview, societal structures, physical features, economic structures, political climate, behavior patterns, dress, customs, religious practices, power centers, convictions, rituals, (and) affiliations.”³⁴ Indeed, as soon as social institutions are included in the definition, readers need familiarity with the history and workings of “family, government, economics, education, and religion.”³⁵ Such studies are read-

30 Marshall Sahlins, “Two or Three Things that I Know About Culture,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5, no. 2 (Sept 1999): 400. He notes L.A. White’s example, that “no ape could distinguish between holy water and distilled water” (Ibid).

31 Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 9.

32 In this definition, we are identifying physical objects and practices as the products of culture, but the ‘group memories’ as culture itself. This definition assumes a symbolic model (see text).

33 Hunger, sex, empathy, and basic emotions clearly have biological roots, but the specifics of the associated practices and meanings are still determined socially. For example, hunger in a ‘coming of age ritual,’ may be given a social value that trumps the *prima facie* value.

34 Adapted from a bullet list, with the conjunctions added, from James Dvorak, “John H. Elliott’s Social-Scientific Criticism,” *Trinity Journal* 28, no. 2 (Sept 2007): 264, accessed June 25, 2017, ATLASerials, Religion Series, EBSCOhost.

35 Malina, *The New Testament World*, 20.

ily available, so that, for example, purity practices have been described, their historical connections identified, their symbolic meanings explained, and the framework in which they function explicated.³⁶

While this profusion of models is daunting, we suggest the following basic framework, which is operationally streamlined for literary interpretation, and focuses on the elements of a symbolic universe, cognitive maps, and social institutions. As our definition notes, the central goal of culture is to attach meaning and value to objects, practices, and beliefs. For this reason, we apply a symbolic model of analysis, which “presupposes that human individual and group behavior is organized around the symbolic meanings and expectations that are attached to objects that are socially valued.”³⁷ The assigning of such meaning suggests a basic relation between a culture’s symbolic universe and its social institutions.

We begin with the notion of a symbolic universe, which here indicates the worldview that assigns meaning to objects and behaviors.³⁸ While the Sabbath is a day of the week, in the symbolic universe of first-century Judaism, it is ‘sacred time.’ While the stars and planets are points of light in the sky, in the symbolic universe of first-century Judaism, they are spiritual powers that affect one’s life. Each culture inculcates this basic understanding of the world within its members through various educational practices.³⁹

Here it is important to make a distinction between the symbolic universe and the actual world. The symbolic universe is constructed, at least in part, out of a group’s experiences in the world, and so is connected to the actual world *at the level of experience but not at the level of ontology*. This means that a group’s worldview is not an actual reality, but the set of assumptions that determine one’s experience of the world.⁴⁰ If one’s worldview is that windstorms are

36 For collections of studies from various perspectives, see *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce Malina, and Gerd Theissen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), and *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996).

37 Malina, *The New Testament World*, 22.

38 Kari Syreeni addresses the symbolic universe as the “socially conditioned, ideological (and theological) way of understanding reality” (“Between Heaven and Earth: On the Structure of Matthew’s Symbolic Universe,” *JSNT* 40 [1990]: 9). These are a central aspect of a culture’s group memories.

39 This suggests that certain variations are the result of secondary socialization, such as where the Pharisees understood the symbolic meaning of “the tradition of our forefathers” differently than the Sadducees (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 6.297).

40 David Rhoads writes: “Each society has shared beliefs about time, space, and the meaning of life ... Such beliefs and understandings constitute the fabric of meaning ... The author does not argue for this view of the cosmos but simply assumes that the audience shares

caused by demons, then one will see demonic intent and goals in the winds and will respond with anti-demonic practices. If those practices are associated with a cessation of the winds—as occasionally happened—one would understand this as a validation of that worldview. Modern readers pose physical explanations to these stories, based on their worldview, but such is anachronistic with respect to the intended audience, and so disrupts communication.⁴¹ The interpretation of the world is so laden by cultural assumptions that one generally sees the world as a concrete manifestation of those assumptions.

However, the symbolic universe is still connected to the actual world. Indeed, the symbolic universe originated as a working explanation for the world, so that humans could understand and control mysterious processes, including crop failure, sickness, floods, and drought. If these ‘explanations of the world’ and ‘experiences of the world’ should consistently come into conflict, in the collective experiences of the group, a shift to a new symbolic universe eventually occurs. Returning to our discussion of ‘empty’ in Chapter 1, the worker’s experience of an empty gas drum exploding shifts the categories of meaning for ‘empty,’ and with it the world based on those categories.

This suggests that reality is not wholly a social construction, but that human experience remains connected to the actual world, and may even push back against one’s symbolic universe. Just as one’s experience of the world is shaped by one’s worldview, so one’s worldview is shaped by one’s experience of the world. Hence, a culture’s reality always involves a tension between that culture’s symbolic universe and the participant’s experiences in the world.

Shifts in the symbolic universe may be coordinated with developments in the social history of a group. For example, the early Christian movement shifted the symbolic universe dealing with times, foods, and actions, in accordance with their new understanding of the Kingdom of God. These shifts were rooted in Jesus’ actions and teaching (e.g., picking grain and healing on the Sabbath, touching lepers and bleeding women), and validated in the disciples’ experiences (God’s evaluation at the transfiguration, the resurrection of Jesus). Indeed, the Gospel of John makes this validation clear in the healing of the blind man, who states: “We know that God does not listen to sinners ... If this man were not from God, he could do nothing” (Jn. 9:31–33). Such changes in

the same worldview” (“Social Criticism: Crossing Boundaries,” in *Mark & Method*, 2nd ed., ed. Janice Anderson and Stephen Moore [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008], 149, 151).

41 As Sahlins notes: “These people (of a different culture) have not organized their existence in answer to what has been troubling us lately” (“Two or Three Things,” 406; parenthesis mine).

the symbolic universe are expected to produce changes in the church's social history, and these may be glimpsed in the categorization of foods (Mk. 7:14–19), Peter's vision of unclean animals and gentiles (Act 10), and the dispute over table-fellowship with gentiles (Gal. 2:11–16).

Next, we turn to the arrangement of elements in the symbolic universe. These elements stand in relation to each other, and these relations are often hierarchically ranked.⁴² For example, the Mishnah outlines the ranking of 'space' from common (outside the land of Israel), through stages of increased holiness (temple mount, court of priests), to the place most sacred (the Holy of Holies).⁴³ All spaces are aligned and ranked on this axis, from defiled space to sacred space. Similarly, beings of all kinds are ranked along an axis of authority, with the highest position held by God, followed by angels and demons (with various internal rankings), followed by humans (with further internal ranking), and ending with animals.⁴⁴ These relations suggest an internal map—a cognitive map—where objects are ranked by various values. We will use the term 'cognitive map' to indicate these relations, emphasizing the relative values of objects along an axis.⁴⁵

Cognitive maps allow one to characterize the relations between objects. For example, how might readers understand an interaction between a human and a demon that causes blindness? First-century readers would automatically know that humans are lower on the map of authority, and so would have no right to command the demon. This single axis reveals the hopelessness of the situation:

42 The ranking occurs in accordance with central cultural values, and are usually organized in binary pairs, such as holy-defiled, pure-impure, in group-out group, and in place-out of place. While these values have several functions, here we are interested in how they create ranking criteria. For example, the 'holy-defiled' value creates a scale for grading objects, where objects at the top of the scale are privileged over those lower down, and items at the lowest end (lepers, dead bodies) are avoided altogether. Note that defiled objects are not avoided simply because of their place, but because objects contaminate those who handle them.

43 m. Kelim 1:6–9.

44 Cf. Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992), 181. For an extensive map of persons, see Malina, *The New Testament World*, 174.

45 Cf. Jerome Neyrey: "One can gain a sense of the basic cultural lines whereby second-temple Jews classified and located persons, times, places and things. These classifications can be expressed in a set of 'maps' such as a 'map of persons' (t. Meg. 2.7), 'map of places' (m. Kelim 1.6–9), 'map of times' (m. Moed) and 'map of things' (m. Kelim 1.3)" ("Clean/Unclean, Pure/Polluted, and Holy/Profane: The Idea and the System of Purity," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996], 91).

the demon always wins. Even the godly Noah could not, on his own authority, stop demons from blinding his grandchildren (Jub. 10:1–7).⁴⁶

If this were the only axis, then humans could only deal with demons by influencing spiritual beings that have authority over demons. Humans could pray to God, influencing God to act on their behalf. So, when the disciples ask Jesus why they could not cast out a spirit, he responds: “This kind can come out only through prayer” (Mk. 9:29). Similarly, Sirach 38:9 gives the advice: “My child, when you are ill, do not delay, but pray to the Lord, and he will heal you.” Alternatively, humans could use a spell that invokes the name of God, under the conviction—located in their symbolic universe—that something of the authority of God is found in the name itself.

But other axes exist, and these suggest other ways of dealing with demons. One such axis is that of power.⁴⁷ The axis of power generally follows the axis of authority, with God again at the highest position, followed by angels and demons, followed by humans, and finally by animals. As humans have less power than demons, they cannot, on their own, force demons to do anything. But this changes when humans gain access to outside power, as when one has an amulet or root imbued with special power. Now the exorcist-amulet combination might have greater power than the spirit, and so force it to leave. Josephus provides such an example, describing a root that drives out spirits (War 7.181–185). This is not a matter of the exorcist’s authority over the spirit, but an exercise of raw power that violates the axis of authority.

Finally, we need to relate this discussion to the existence of social institutions. Cognitive maps are composed of individual axes, but these axes are not isolated from each other. Indeed, an object may be described by its placement on multiple axes. Within a culture, certain of these axes intersect and become relatively fixed, resulting in stable nodes. Social institutions tend to arise at these nodes, with the development of common objects, valuations, and expectations. For example, the religious institution arises at a stable intersection in the axes of time and space, both ranked from sacred to profane, creating a node at sacred time-sacred space.⁴⁸ The institution expands to exert control over elements linked to this node, including objects (Sabbath, temple, ceremonies), valuations (holy, pure), and expectations (God’s presence, God’s protection).

46 On the suggestion of ‘charismatic’ miracle workers, cf. Chapter 2, fn. 60.

47 In *Koinē* Greek, this is the distinction between *exousia* (right to command) and *dynamis* (power); cf. Chapter 2, fn. 65.

48 Malina defines the sacred as “that which is set apart ... persons, places, things, and time that are symbolled or filled with some sort of set-apartness” (*The New Testament Word*, 163).

But all of these are textured by the intersection itself, so that temple, rituals, prayer, sacrifice, and protection all carry the symbolic meaning of 'sacredness.'

In this example, the temple is defined by the intersection, so that the temple is not grasped as common space for common beings or common actions. Indeed, it is not part of the common world at all, but is "an intermediate space where interaction can take place."⁴⁹ At this intersection, God and humans can exist in near proximity, provided that each makes certain accommodations. God makes the accommodation that humans can take on ritual purity, while humans make the accommodation of participation in the cult (washings, offerings), so as to symbolically embody the central values (holiness, purity).⁵⁰ Here boundaries are critical, for these not only mark the edges of violations but dictate the meaning of the violation. Should impure humans enter this intersection, sacred space-sacred time would be contaminated, with risks to human health and life. But the ultimate risk of contamination is pollution, where *the quality of sacredness is destroyed* (e.g., 'the abomination that produces desolation,' Dan. 11:31, Mk. 13:14), resulting in God's withdrawal from the intersection, and so from Jewish society, with the attendant loss of protection and identity.⁵¹

Hence, the institution promulgated rules and norms to prevent any possible contamination of the intersection. Here the axis of human action, extending from sacred action to profane action, was brought to the intersection of sacred time-sacred space. This embodied the fundamental intuition that only certain kinds of action are appropriate to sacredness, resulting in the Sabbath prohibitions in healing, reaping, and sowing. These actions were not evaluated as evil, but only as inappropriate to the intersection. To engage in them was to contaminate sacred time, with risks to the person and the nation. In short, the religious institution did not create purity rules because they were legalistic or even just to show that they were different, but to maintain the sacredness of sacred time-sacred space, so ensuring the health of the people and maintaining the presence of God. This explains some of the more radical statements on the Sabbath:

49 Ibid., 183; based on Malina's model of spaces in the Temple: God's space, human's space, and the area of interaction.

50 As Malina writes: "To approach the sacred, one had to be sacred and pure ... a condition for access" (Ibid., 171).

51 Cf. Rhoads: "If people defiled the sanctuary in a flagrant way, God might withdraw from the sanctuary, thereby removing the protection and the benefits that God's presence secured" ("Social Criticism," 159).

And everyone who pollutes it (the Sabbath) let him surely die. And anyone who will do work therein, let him surely die forever so that the Children of Israel might guard this day throughout their generations and not be uprooted from the land because it is a holy day and a blessed day. And every man who guards it and keeps therein a Sabbath from all his work will be holy and blessed always like us.⁵²

To this point, we have presented culture as a coherent system that harmonizes all of life's actions and beliefs. But this is only an idealized presentation. Contradictions occur because culture is not fully integrated. In our texts, these especially occur over the placement of boundaries, at the interface between existing institutions, and during the introduction of new situations. All these areas of conflict can be demonstrated in the debates of the Mishnah and New Testament.

For example, let us return to the sacred space-sacred time intersection. One of the foundational intuitions is that only certain types of action are appropriate to this node. This node was stabilized in Jewish society through the application of oral and written laws, as dictated by the sacred practitioners. These practitioners were a select group at the high end of the axes of 'religious understanding' and 'religious authority.' These practitioners did not evaluate the oral laws as arbitrary demands, but as representing a protective fence, keeping the people from violating the central elements of the written law, and so from contaminating sacred space-sacred time.⁵³ When violations did occur, the practitioners developed secondary practices for evaluating the violation, cleansing the violator, and re-securing the central values. In this way, everyone knew what was appropriate to sacred time.

But it also created specific areas of conflict, as where actions not permitted in sacred space-sacred time were required by other parts of the religious institution. Such occurred when the Passover fell on a Sabbath, for the Passover required actions inappropriate to the Sabbath, such as slaughtering. This debate is recorded in the Mishnah along with the conclusion: "These matters regarding the Passover sacrifice override (the prohibitions of) the Sabbath" (m. Pes. 6:1).⁵⁴ In short, the practitioners issued an accommodation for this conflict,

52 Jub. 2:27–28; transl. O.S. Wintermute, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985).

53 Cf. Leonard Kravitz and Kerry Olitzky: "The rabbis used the metaphor of a fence around the Torah as a means of protecting the essence of Torah in the midst of a proliferation of new demands" (*Pirke Avot: A Modern Commentary on Jewish Ethics* [New York: UAH C Press, 1993], 2).

54 All citations of the *Mishnah* are from *The Mishnah: A New Translation*, transl. Jacob Neusner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

and as practitioners were high on the axes of religious understanding-religious authority, their accommodation was considered authoritative.

Another example occurs in the Cleansing of the Temple incident (Mk. 11:15–17). Pilgrims to Jerusalem needed animals for sacrifice and specific types of money for the Temple tax. As the actions of buying and selling were common actions, and so inappropriate to sacred space, the religious practitioners created an accommodation. Jesus specifically rejects this accommodation, creating the expectation that he will engage in secondary practices for evaluating and changing this violation. Hence, he engages in debate (“My house shall be called a house of prayer”), correction (overturning the tables), and the reproduction of central values (the Temple is sacred space).⁵⁵ This was not simply an argument about prayer or selling practices, or even about the exploitation of worshippers—these are secondary issues. For Jesus, the argument was over the founding node: the temple is sacred space where common and profane actions are contaminating and risk pollution. As Adela Collins writes: “The outer court was to be sacred space devoted to prayer and teaching, not civic space open to the general public and devoted to profane activities.”⁵⁶ This is emphasized in the story’s final statement, that Jesus “would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple” (Mk. 11:16), so reiterating the central value of excluding common actions (using the temple as a shortcut) from sacred space. In short, Jesus did not attack the idea that the temple was sacred space, but *made it a thoroughgoing principle by removing the accommodations*.

A more complex example occurs in Jesus’ healing on the Sabbath. The notion of healing includes its symbolic meaning as work, so that it was inappropriate to sacred time. However, humans were made in the image of God and so ranked high on the map of value, and this suggested that threats to life must be dealt with in all types of time. The institution recognized this conflict and issued accommodations, such as m. Yoma 8:6: “And any matter of doubt as to danger to life overrides the prohibitions of the Sabbath.” But non-threatening illnesses were to be held over to the next day: “And they do not induce vomiting. And they do not straighten (the limb of) a child or set a broken limb” (m. Shab. 22:6). The practitioners even took into account the possibility of acciden-

55 As Donald Hagner writes: “Jesus was not against these practices in principle, which were necessary for the functioning of the sacred cultus, but only the stationing of them in the temple area” (*Matthew, 14–28*, Word Biblical Commentary 33b [Dallas: Word Books, 1995], 600).

56 Adela Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 528.

tal healing on the Sabbath: “He whose hand or foot was dislocated should not pour cold water over them. But he washes in the usual way. And if he is healed, he is healed” (m. Shab. 22:6).⁵⁷

Using these materials, we can construct the ideal rule (no healing in sacred time), the accommodations (healing for threat to life, accidental healing), and the violation (deliberate healing). Indeed, these can even be ranked as a cognitive map. However, this map was challenged by Jesus and other Jewish groups,⁵⁸ creating the expectation of secondary practices for evaluating and changing the violations. Hence, when Jesus heals on the Sabbath, he mounts a defense from within the institution’s own accommodations (“Is it lawful ... to save life or to kill?” Mk. 3:4), along with a corrective (doing good, saving life) that maintains the central values (sacred time, human life). But he does not argue that one can do whatever one wants on the Sabbath. While there are difficulties with Jesus’ argument,⁵⁹ he is not discarding the notion that sacred time is different from common time.

We may summarize this discussion by suggesting that our model reader manages the marks on the page as would a representative person from the intended audience (ideal reader). Our reader’s first step is to identify and characterize the culture of the intended audience. This characterization employs a variety of disciplines, with the general goal of creating that audience’s symbolic universe, cognitive maps, and social institutions. While characterization is the initial goal, the final goal is to overwrite the reading-self, so that the reading-self employs this worldview in constructing and experiencing the storyworld.

Finally, we need to spend a moment discussing the first-century literary institution, and how the modern reader is to understand their use of the narrative genre. The assumptions behind early forms of structuralism and narrative criticism include the notion that forms are universal, so that an understanding of modern narrative structure necessarily applies to ancient narratives. It is clear that certain universals do exist: all cultures tell stories, all have plots and characters, and all use represented speech (Wallace Martin calls this a

57 The general rule on accidental violations is: “This is the general principle: All those who may be liable to sin offerings in fact are not liable unless at the beginning and the end, their [sin] is done inadvertently” (m. Shab. 11:6).

58 One community even issued the following, regarding a person who fell into a well: “No one should take him out with a ladder or a rope or a utensil” (CD 11:10, 15–17). All citations of the *Dead Sea Scrolls* are from *The Dead Sea Scrolls, Study Edition*, vol. 1 and 2, ed. Florentino Martínez and Eibert Tigchelaar (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1997, 1998).

59 As Robert Guelich notes: “Jesus alters the Jewish understanding of saving a life in terms of mortal danger. How does healing a crippled hand equal ‘saving a life’?” (*Mark 1–8:26*, Word Biblical Commentary 34a [Dallas: Word Books, 1989], 135).

“universal phenomenon”⁶⁰). But not all narrative characteristics are universal. For example, ancient literature rarely if ever employed figural narration, free indirect discourse, unreliable narrators, objective narration, or stream of consciousness narration. At some point, these arose as creative experiments, which were only later normalized as recognizable forms and styles. For this reason, we must detail the reading experiences of first-century Mediterranean readers and hearers. For example, did readers from this period identify with characters? Did narratives engage the reader’s emotions? Did narrative simulations seem real to those readers? Does an oral culture grasp narratives differently?⁶¹

This task may be approached from three different areas. First, we turn to the cognitive sciences, using studies to detail how humans in general engage in narrative construction and understanding. For example, studies have shown that empathy and the basic emotions are human universals, so that environmental cues activate these mental programs in ancient and modern readers alike. When someone smiles, it triggers the mirror-neuron system in all cultures. Marie-Laure Ryan uses the example of “explaining the actions of people by inferring their mental states,” and notes that this process “is not specific to the understanding of narrative; it is, rather, a fundamental mode of operation of the human mind.”⁶²

Second, we turn to descriptions of literary experience from members of the intended audience. Ancient authors occasionally described literary experience, usually in theoretical works such as Aristotle’s *Poetics*. For example, Aristotle writes that “anyone who hears the events which occur shudders and feels pity at what happens.”⁶³ This suggests that readers in the ancient world were expected to feel emotions in their experience of the text. Unfortunately, such examples are difficult to come by, as few first-century Mediterranean authors show any interest in detailing the narrative experience. Consequently, we will use examples from the broader Greco-Roman world, including Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus.

The third area to which we turn is literature from the general period. On occasion, narratives offer clues to the reading experience. Jonas Grethlein notes an example from a Hellenistic novel, where a character in the novel feels emo-

60 Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative*, 138–139.

61 Cf. Lucretia Yaghjian, “Ancient Reading,” in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 208.

62 Marie-Laure Ryan, “Narratology and Cognitive Science: A Problematic Relation,” *Style* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 477, accessed Sept 25, 2015, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

63 Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 53b.

tions over an embedded event.⁶⁴ Similarly, Ion admits to Socrates that “when performing Homer he is taken out of himself and possessed by the narrative, so that his eyes brim with compassion and his hair bristles with fear.”⁶⁵ These texts suggest that feeling emotions was part of the narrative experience, in both written and performed narratives. Indeed, when taken together with the understanding of emotions from cognitive science and the descriptions of ancient literary experience, this *confirms that ancient readers, including the intended readers of New Testament, were expected to have emotional responses to the events in the storyworld*. The text was never intended for an objective and detached reader, who used reason alone to create propositional lessons, as if narrative was simply a lecture in ornamental form.

Given this discussion, our characterization of the experience of New Testament narratives will include available materials from these three areas. It is important to note that these materials only reveal the possibility of some effect for that audience. Where a particular effect can be validated in the surrounding literature, it automatically becomes a possibility for use in our target text. Where multiple conflicting effects are shown to occur in the broader culture (e.g., the use of different types of heroes), readers select the most appropriate effect based on cues in the target text. Indeed, Hans Jauss identifies five types of heroes, along with the cues for identifying each.⁶⁶ This is no different from accessing contextual clues in selecting a particular use for a word.

4 Identifying the Intended Audience

To this point, we have examined how readers characterize the culture of the intended audience, and now turn to how readers identify this audience. Identification is problematic, as ‘the intended audience’ is an artificial construct, based on the notion of a common culture for all people in a geographic region at a particular time. While culture is a leveling force, with mechanisms for control and reproduction, complete homogeneity is never achieved. Such is easily seen in the different politico-religious parties of first-century Judaism, where

64 Jonas Grethlein, “Is Narrative ‘The Description of Fictional Mental Functioning,’” *Style* 49, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 271, accessed Sept. 9, 2015, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

65 G.R.F. Ferrari, “Plato and Poetry,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1: Classical Criticism, ed. George Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 95.

66 Hans Jauss, “Levels of Identification of Hero and Audience,” *New Literary History* 5, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 283–317.

Pharisees and Sadducees shared many of the same institutions, but with different beliefs on the afterlife and angels. Such differences clearly need to be taken into account when creating an ideal reader.

But an excessive emphasis on difference is also problematic. When highly specific situations are applied, the text's elements are increasingly shaped by those situations. This produces a reading position that is so locally specific, that the intended meanings are only apparent to a small group. Indeed, it turns the text into an allegory of the situation itself, and without the key to that allegory, the text remains opaque. When pushed to the extreme, this creates a narrative that no longer employs public language.

For example, the early Christian community was shaped by major historical events, such as the Jewish War and the Neronian Persecution, as well as minor historical events, such as the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19) and the earthquake in Philippi (Acts 16:26). One could choose to read the Revelation of John as a commentary on any one of these, with interpretations that move from the reasonable to the ridiculous. Dwight Peterson notes that Markan interpreters often pose a specific intended audience, as located by specific events and issues, and how this results in divergent interpretations. His conclusion is telling:

The scholars whose work this book has reviewed all place a great deal of weight on the appropriate construction of the Markan community; and each produces a different one. Every time, these communities go along with interpretations of Mark's text that are in tension with the reading which other Markan community constructors produce.⁶⁷

The central problem, here, may be characterized by returning to our communication model (Chapter 2). It is common for authors to address specific historical events in their texts, and so to create an implied authorA who shapes the text as an interpretation of these events. The problem arises when readers decide that the text is about some event prior to reading, that is, prior to accessing the cues in the text. In such a case, readers are shaping the text with their own criteria, instead of the text's cues for contextualization. When readers do this, they are constructing the implied authorA, assuming that this event is so important that the actual author must have been addressing it. However, the implied authorA

67 Dwight Peterson, *The Origins of Mark: The Markan Community in Current Debate* (Brill Academic: Leiden; 2000), 12. Given the historical problems, R.T. France writes: "This commentary is not therefore based consciously on a particular theory of authorship, date, and location" (*The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 41).

is inaccessible to readers. As the New Critics remind us, we are text-readers, not mind-readers. Indeed, the actual author may create an implied author^A who has no interest in any historical events.

Instead, our reader constructs a general or representative intended audience, who is aware of the various conflicts and events, but allows *the cues in the text* to select those appropriate for the implied reader. This is the distinction between the ideal reader who is aware of all aspects of culture, and the implied reader who is pared down by textual cues to specific cultural positions. It is likely that this reader would recognize cues for the Jewish War in Mark's 'little apocalypse' (Mk. 13), at which point it is appropriate to construct an implied reader who sees these concerns in the text. But it is unlikely to see cues for Paul's earthquake in the earthquakes of Mk. 13:8, and so to read this chapter as a commentary on Paul's life.

Furthermore, some texts make it clear that they are addressed to a general audience, and not a local one. This occurs when an author explains local customs, so as to be understandable by the larger public—a tactic for which the Gospel of Mark is famous (e.g., Mk. 5:41, 7:3–4, 12:42, 15:34), but is seen in other New Testament texts as well (e.g., Mt. 1:23, 22:23, 27:46; Lk. 22:7; Jn. 1:38, 18:28, 20:16; Acts 23:8). As Mary Ann Tolbert notes: "Mark was *not* written to the problems of a specific, local community but ... for a wide readership."⁶⁸ The author's assumption is that local customs need explained, but that the general worldview is sufficiently common for communication to occur throughout the broader readership.

To this point, we have focused on how restricting the audience is problematic. However, drawing the audience too broadly is also problematic. Abstracting the intended audience to a 'human in general' fails to individuate the reader for the text at hand. Indeed, this may produce cross-cultural disjunctions, where the ideal reader is unable to account for textual specifics. For example, 'humans in general' and 'sickness in general' cannot account for the father who is convinced that a spirit is throwing his son into fire and water in order to kill him (Mk. 9:17–22). Similarly, readers who are unaware of major historical events, such as the Jewish War, have difficulty understanding the apocalyptic imagery of Mark 13, and risk creating bizarre, anachronistic meanings.

In short, the identification of the intended audience represents a balance. If the audience is drawn too specifically, then the language of the text moves toward a private understanding and subverts communication. If the audience

68 Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 1989), 304; author's italics. For a summary of the literature, see Collins, *Mark*, 96–102.

is draw too generally, then the ideal reader cannot be individuated for the text at hand, which also subverts communication. At times, highly local circumstances are available, as where Paul outlines specific conflicts in occasional letters (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:12, 5:1), but this is not the case for most New Testament narratives. A representative knowledge of the culture and history—and especially of the underlying worldview, cognitive maps, and social institutions—is appropriate in constructing the ideal reader, while local materials are best excluded. The text itself, through various cues, will select the important cultural aspects for the implied reader.

Finally, how do our readers identify the intended audience? It is best to begin with the text itself, based on the assumption that language is indexed to culture and so reproduces a culture's social institutions. The institutions can be recognized in the text itself. Levinson uses this kind of identification in his reading of *The Brothers Karamazov*. Using the text alone, he identifies Dostoyevsky's intended audience as "competent readers of Russian, practiced in narrative fiction, aware of Russian history, familiar with Russian religious traditions, and so on."⁶⁹ He also outlines how he arrived at this intended audience:

I consulted no oracle for it, neither did I study Dostoyevsky's diaries or the records left by his physician. I merely considered the novel itself, the demands of comprehension inherent in it, and the novel's context of creation (e.g., nineteenth-century Russia).⁷⁰

Here it is important to distinguish between using the text to identify the intended audience and using the text to characterize the audience. Let us begin with the latter. Some interpreters use the text to characterize the implied reader, and use this implied reader as a stand in for the intended audience. For example, one might read a miracle story, recognize that this story requires a reader who accepts magical causation, and then assume that the intended audience must also believe in magical causation. Here the text is not used to identify, but to characterize the intended audience.

This path is problematic for three central reasons. First, the presence of magical causation does not mean that the intended audience believes in magical causation, as in the modern genre of fantasy. To place this in our communication model, these interpreters begin by creating an implied reader from the

69 Jerrold Levinson, "Intention and Interpretation: A Last Look," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 227–228.

70 Ibid.

text, and then back-reason to a theoretical intended audience, under the hope that this bears some relation to the actual intended audience. Second, this characterization is based on circular reasoning. These interpreters recognize magical causation because it was triggered by cues in their own culture. They have only seen what their background allowed them to see. Indeed, it is easy enough to image readers from a culture with no background in magical causation who would miss the cues for magical causation entirely. Finally, these readers have characterized causation from their own culture's perspective, and not from the perspective of the intended audience. The intended audience may have a different understanding, resulting in a different meaning. These readers are not employing the tools designed to characterize otherness, and so tend to reproduce another version of their own culture from the text.

Our path uses the text to identify, but not characterize, the intended audience. Here readers recognize cultural elements in the text and attempt to match these to an appropriate culture. The recognition of *Koinē* Greek, Aramaic terms, and Latinisms in the synoptic Gospels, along with elements of Roman occupation, belief in demons, the use of apocalyptic genre, and historical references (e.g., Pontius Pilate, Emperor Augustus, Herod and his brother Philip) allows one to narrow the possible intended audiences to a select few. Once identified, these audiences may then be characterized by the appropriate disciplines (e.g., history, sociology, economics, anthropology), and this characterization used to create a generalized ideal reader.

Here we must again return to the objections of background and circularity. After all, these readers *are still using their background to recognize the text's cultural elements*, so that a culture without any background in magical causation would miss this in the text. The difference is that these readers use their background to identify the existence of elements, without necessarily knowing anything about those elements. The point is only to find cultures with the same recognizable elements, no matter how those elements are characterized. Hence, the issue of mischaracterization is not relevant to this stage.

For example, New Testament readers find a text with Greek words and match it to a culture with Greek words, but without any need to characterize word usage. They find that the text has a paucity of verbs in the optative mood and look for a Greek language with the same, but without any need to know how this mood functions. They find a text that has diseases cured by word magic and match it to a culture with the same odd behavior, but without any need to understand how such works. Only after identification has occurred do readers turn to characterize the culture of that audience. Here readers encounter the second problem, that of circularity in their characterization. To this we now turn.

5 Characterizing Otherness

Are readers capable of understanding the otherness of a foreign culture, or do they only reproduce their own culture when reading? This is the problem of circularity, where readers tend to create a repetition of what they already recognize. To begin this discussion, we need to distinguish between radical and partial otherness. Radical otherness occurs where there are no elements held in common between author and reader. Our example is of two people approaching an elephant, where one only has the sense organ of 'sight' and the other only of 'touch.' The former would describe the elephant with categories of color and distance, while the latter with texture and temperature. Communication in the situation would be impossible, as there are no common categories.

Humans are not characterized by radical otherness, as areas of commonness underlie all cultures. These underlying elements are classified as human universals and include the human senses, such as sight.⁷¹ But sight, by itself, is neither a simple nor a direct acquisition of reflected photons. This is the point of optical illusions, which reveal that the brain pre-processes sensory data in regular ways.⁷² Indeed, sight data is only understandable as its electrical impulses (from the optic nerve) are located by an inner spatial map—which is also a human universal. Barbara Landau notes experiments revealing that even blind children have this spatial map: "These finding suggest that the blind child possesses spatial knowledge that is apparently quite similar to that of the sighted child ... visual experience is not necessary."⁷³ This suggests that the spatial map is not created by experiences of the world, but is innate. She concludes that humans "come to the task of learning prepared with some initial biases, schemas, and structures which will be used to filter, analyze, and reorganize data provided by the environment."⁷⁴

71 The definition of universals is not that every person has the same element, such as the sense of sight, for some individuals are born blind. Rather, a universal is an element that occurs in the majority of individuals in every culture.

72 This occurs with all of the senses. For an example in the sense of touch, cf. Rüdiger Flach and Patrick Haggard: "In summary, then, this encouraged us to believe that the CRE (cutaneous rabbit effect) is a genuine spatiotemporal illusion that, presumably, arises in an early, tactile map" ("The Cutaneous Rabbit Revisited," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 32, no. 3 [June 2006]: 729; my parenthesis).

73 Barbara Landau, "Innate Knowledge," in *A Companion to Cognitive Science*, ed. William Bechtel and George Graham (Malden: Blackwell, 1998), 582.

74 Ibid., 589. William Seager and David Bourget suggest that these features provide "an objective ground for our experiences," even though they may not be "actually instantiated in the world" ("Representationalism about Consciousness," in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, ed. Max Velmans and Susan Schneider [Malden: Blackwell, 2007], 267).

This notion, of “initial biases, schemas, and structures,” means that humans have a common, innate knowledge of the world—a reference world—which is filled in by the human senses.⁷⁵ At this level, which is only concerned with the physical world, there is no radical otherness. Radical otherness would only occur upon meeting an alien with different senses and schemas, such as sense organs for detecting gravitons and electric fields. Such an alien could describe an elephant, but communication could not occur with humans as there is no common reference world.⁷⁶ This is not to say that a common reality does not exist—the elephant is really there—but only that the reference world and the languages based on that reference world are incommensurable.

This notion, of an underlying reference world, can be seen in Willard Quine’s example of a translator who points to an animal and says “rabbit,” while the native speaker utters the word “gavagai.” Quine notes that the understanding of rabbit and gavagai likely contains differences, but also that sufficient commonness exists for the coordination of behavior, so that some communication occurs.⁷⁷ What interests us, here, is the underlying structure that makes this communication possible, such as the universal notion of nouns (nounness) for identifying objects. Even more telling is the common grasp of ‘pointing to something,’ especially as each person has a different spatial relation to the pointing finger and the pointed to object. Without this shared notion of spatial relations, pointing itself is meaningless. These are part of the underlying common conditions that are necessary for communication to occur in the first place.

Furthermore, senses, maps, and *a priori* categories are not the only human universals. Such occur at the level of language (e.g., language universals, language of thought, language center),⁷⁸ specific emotions (e.g., basic emotions,

75 We are using ‘reference world’ for a highly abstract coordinate system that is given as innate knowledge, and so is not subject to regress, making it similar to John Searle’s “thesis of the Background” (“Literary Theory and Its Discontents,” *New Literary History* 25, no. 3 [Summer 1994]: 640–641). John Cook writes: “We were taught the names of sensations by others—by others who knew what our sensations were. So we speak a common language” (“Wittgenstein on Privacy,” in *The Philosophy of Language*, ed. A.P. Martinich [New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], 528).

76 For thoughts about species with other senses, such as the echolocation of a bat, cf. Thomas Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” *The Philosophical Review* 83, no. 4 (October 1974), 435–450.

77 Willard Quine, “Ontological Relativity,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 65, no. 7 (April 1968), 185–212.

78 Cf. Kirsten Malmkjær, “Language Universals,” in *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*, ed. Kirsten Malmkjær (London: Routledge, 1991), 277–284; Noam Chomsky, *New Horizons in the Study*

facial expressions, empathy),⁷⁹ certain human experiences (e.g., hunger, thirst, bodily functions, pain), social and moral universals,⁸⁰ and even our grasp of stories (narrative universals).⁸¹ Indeed, deaf children, who are raised without being taught a sign language, still develop characteristics of Chomsky's universal grammar.⁸² Similarly, Raymond Gibbs and Nicole Wilson note that common bodily experiences, such as hunger, form the basis for language metaphors, so that "the similarity in human bodies across cultures and environments provides one reason why embodied metaphors are so ubiquitous in the world's languages."⁸³ Xiaosue Xiao makes the argument from universal archetypal images (water, light, mother), noting that Chinese and English "share similar metaphorical extensions and categorizations of light, which is associated with that which is 'revealing' and 'outstanding.'"⁸⁴ Marshall summarizes our concerns here:

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- of Language and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); 60, 3–5; Fred Adams, "Thoughts and Their Contents," in *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Stephen Stich and Ted Warfield (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 144–145; and John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, "On the Universality of Human Nature and the Uniqueness of the Individual: The Role of Genetics and Adaption," *Journal of Personality* 58.1 (March 1990): 17–67.
- 79 Cf. Carroll Izard, "Basic Emotions, Natural Kinds, Emotion Schemas, and a New Paradigm," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 2.3 (Sept. 2007): 260–280. On a specific innate fear, see Vanessa LoBue and Judy DeLoache, "Detecting the Snake in the Grass: Attention to Fear-Relevant Stimuli in Adults and Children," *Psychological Science*, 19.3 (2008): 284–289.
- 80 For example: "Every culture has such purity rules" (Malina, *The New Testament World*, 168). Similarly, all cultures have prohibitions against unprovoked murder (John Mikhail, "Is the Prohibition of Homicide Universal? Evidence from Comparative Criminal Law," *Brooklyn Law Review* 75, no. 2 [2009], 497–515, accessed May 15, 2017, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1573194>).
- 81 Cf. Patrick Hogan, "Narrative Universals, Heroic Tragi-Comedy, and Shakespeare's Political Ambivalence," *College Literature* 33 (Winter 2006): 34–66.
- 82 Cf. discussion in Adele Abrahamsen, "Cognitive and Linguistic Development," in *A Companion to Cognitive Science*, ed. William Bechtel and George Graham (Malden: Blackwell, 1998), esp. 147–149.
- 83 Raymond Gibbs and Nicole Wilson, "Bodily Action and Metaphorical Meaning," *Style* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 539. Important for our discussion is the following: "If hunger and desire are highly correlated, and if people metaphorically make sense of their desires partly in terms of hunger, then these more prominent parts of their hunger experiences should be invariantly mapped onto their different concepts for desire" (Ibid., 533).
- 84 Xiaosue Xiao, "Constructing Common Ground for Cross-Cultural Communication," *China Media Research* 10, no. 4 (Oct 2014): 2, accessed Feb. 15, 2017, EBSCOhost. On the archetypal metaphors that arise: "Although the expression of these phenomena may differ between cultures, their prime imagery is there for all to see ... What remains unclear for people of other cultures are the deep cultural connotations of such imagery" (Ibid., 7).

But whether I am watching a movie about Japanese warriors in the fourteenth century, or reading an epic poem of war from an ancient Greek culture ... I know—that is, I recognize as human—the emotions, motives, actions, and existential states being represented. I can recognize, understand, and sympathize with what is represented because the referents are universal to my species.⁸⁵

While considerable argument occurs over the origin and structure of universals (the essentialist/constructionist debate), it is clear that universals do occur, and these create the conditions that are sufficiently common for communication to occur. Indeed, the fact of cross-cultural communication can be shown through behavioral verification, as in our earlier example of an international treaty (Chapter 2). In short, radical otherness is a myth.

The question, then, is how partial otherness may be engaged so as to result in communication. All social institutions, including language, are rooted in the common reference world bequeathed to us by our common biology and experiences. Here readers apply three specialized mechanisms that allow for a more complete characterization of a partially understood system.⁸⁶ The first involves the use of the hermeneutic circle. As discussed earlier (Chapter 2), readers may produce a general understanding of the whole system from the parts that are known, and use this whole to posit the basic function of the parts that are not known. The second is analogy, based on similarities between a known system and a partially known system. The third is associative thinking, where non-deductive connections are posited to fill the gaps in the partially known system.⁸⁷ The check on any conclusions so drawn, is that the posited system must bring coherence to the various elements, as well as correctly describe one's experience of that system. One may posit all manner of interesting lateral associations, but only certain ones fulfill these requirements.

Marco Caracciolo provides an example of analogy, by considering how a person without the sense of pain ("congenital insensitivity to pain") comes to

85 Marshall Gregory, *Shaped by Stories: The Ethical Power of Narratives* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2009), 46.

86 Other mechanisms also exist, such as those used to understand a radical intracultural disjunction (Chapter 2), the use of models from cultural anthropology, and the use of abduction (see next fn.).

87 This refers to various types of creative thinking, involving lateral, associative, divergent, and metaphorical connections. This may be extended into reasoning from a collection of elements to a system that explains those elements; Dvorak calls this 'abduction': "Abduction starts with an observable fact and reasons backwards to the best explanation of the fact" ("Social-Scientific Criticism," 263).

understand pain in a narrative. He uses the following passage, from the novel *Blindness*: “The pain came back instantly, as if someone were sawing, drilling, and hammering the wound.”⁸⁸ The central point, for Caracciolo, is that this description is rooted in experiences that are common to author and reader. Both grasp “sawing, drilling, and hammering” as damaging events. The reader without knowledge of pain then uses analogy to relate this common understanding of damage to the unknown sense of pain: “She would not be able to imaginatively enact pain, but she would be able to imaginatively enact bodily damage, and would associate the two states (one of which is internal, the other external).”⁸⁹ He concludes that this reader would still not have the experience of pain, but “would probably come to know something about pain ... a reasonable approximation of it.”⁹⁰

Similarly, New Testament readers encounter an unknown sense where Jesus “perceives in his spirit” what other characters are thinking (Mk. 2:8). The mechanism of the hermeneutic circle reveals that the whole of the text is about knowing another person’s private thoughts, so that the unknown aspect is an alien means of perception, as if from a new type of sense organ. Next, readers note the similarity of this ‘perception of thoughts’ to their normal means of grasping another person’s inner emotions, that is, by seeing that person’s facial expressions. They would formulate an analogy between the systems of ‘grasping private emotions’ and ‘grasping private thoughts,’ using lateral thinking to fill in the gaps of this analogy. The resultant understanding would then be tested within the narrative, to see if it gathered the various elements into a coherent system, as well as explained the various behaviors. Using these mechanisms, readers are able to gain a general understanding of this new sense of ‘mindreading.’

88 Marco Caracciolo, citing José Saramago’s *Blindness*, in “Blind Reading: Toward an Enactivist Theory of the Reader’s Imagination,” in *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*, ed. Lars Bernaerts, Dirk De Geest, Luc Herman, and Bart Vervaeck (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), Kindle edition, Kindle locations 1792–1793.

89 Ibid., 1801–1802, author’s parenthesis. He adds: “It is by metaphorically associating the experience to be described with an activity that we can give an idea of what it is like to have that experience” (Ibid., Kindle locations 1785–1786). While this has metaphorical qualities, it is better described as a form of analogy between systems, and so is restrained by the analogy’s connecting to the existing system.

90 Ibid., Kindle 1800–1805. Similarly, anthropologists use analogy and association to characterize the experience of a foreign emotion (e.g., *schadenfreude*) for English audiences.

6 Summary

In this chapter, we outlined the initial steps of an ethical criticism that takes account of the author's voice. Reading a narrative begins with readers creating a mental simulation. For these simulations to achieve the author's ends, readers need to follow the narrative without interference from the actual-self. To accomplish this, the actual-self creates a version of itself—a reading-self—for the simulation. Initially, the reading-self responds to the simulation as would the actual-self. But the reading-self is designed without an executive function, so that it follows the simulation's directions. Every line of the narrative overwrites the reading-self with new beliefs, behaviors, and institutions. In this way, the reading-self serially becomes other with respect to the actual-self.

When reading a text from a different culture, this basic scheme needs to be modified. Authors design their narratives for a specific culture, so that their saying and doing is distorted when employing different institutions. For this reason, our readers begin by identifying the intended audience, using cultural elements found in the text. Then our readers turn to characterizing that audience, using wider cultural materials to pose models for their symbolic universe, cognitive maps, and social institutions.

These models are tested by applying them to the identified culture, to see how well they gather the broader collection of elements. Models never gather all the elements, as cultures are not uniform and their social institutions are often in conflict. Nevertheless, the larger culture is founded on broad areas of commonality. Unless aspects of the text require specificity (occasional letters, local applications), characterization of this audience is understood broadly. The actual-self uses this characterization to overwrite the reading-self, so that the reading-self shapes the textual elements from this perspective.

Entering the Storyworld

Once our readers have located textual elements, how does reading proceed? When readers encounter a child who is affected by the power of the moon (*selē-niazomai*, Mt. 17:15), they use a reading-self who wholly accepts that the moon causes people to “fall into the fire and into the water.”¹ But do they pass a good Enlightenment judgment on this event, stating that moon-causation represent a pre-scientific attempt to explain the mysterious? In other words, how do readers engage a narrative that employs a worldview that the actual-self rejects?

Here, there are two central issues that are related to our ethic of reading. First, readers who judge the story as a pre-scientific explanation are still locating this event in the worldview of modern culture. We examined this issue in the prior chapter, concluding that our model readers accept the worldview of the intended audience for their time in the storyworld. In our terminology, the reading-self is overwritten by the culture of the intended audience.

The second issue, which is the focus of this chapter, is that these readers are not ‘in’ the storyworld experiencing the event, but ‘outside’ the storyworld evaluating the event. Such readings may originate in a desire to understand the world objectively or to obtain objective history, but these have little to do with the central function of the narrative genre. When authors select this genre, they reveal their desire to create experiences, and use the design of this genre to produce events. Readers may ignore this design, and attempt to read the New Testament as science, but if their desire is to ‘hear the author’s voice,’ then they need a reading method that produces experiences and events. Hence, this chapter begins with a discussion of the narrative genre.

1 What is Narrative?

A literary narrative is a series of events, connected temporally and causally (including alternate forms of each), which are designed for the reader to experience. While we will examine each of these elements in the following chapters,

1 Warren Carter writes: “The term is better translated ‘moonstruck’ and reflects understandings of the evil power of the moon, or of the moon goddess ‘Selene’ ... The moon/demon/goddess threatens the boy’s life in destructive acts” (*Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* [Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000], 353).

the relevant part here is that authors select the narrative genre to create experiences. This may be opposed to propositional uses of language, such as a physics lecture or a philosophy essay, which neither create events nor are oriented toward reader involvement. It may also be opposed to non-literary narratives, where a series of moments are connected temporally and causally, but are not designed for the reader's involvement. Such might include the description of an animal's development, as found in a biology text, which is designed for description and not participation. Here the expected response would be assent to a set of facts. Readers of the biology text stand outside of the narrative world, watching the moments of an animal's growth, without ever experiencing that animal's tastes, emotions, or moral dilemmas.

A literary narrative is designed for readers to create a storyworld, to enter the events of that world, and to have experiences that conform to the event's structure. As Anthony Thiselton summarizes on parables:

The hearer does not merely observe this 'world' as a spectator; he enters it, and becomes a participant. He actively assumes one of the concrete roles that it offers him, and he finds himself carried forward by a kind of inner logic of consequences which his chosen role brings with it.²

To show that this is the case for New Testament narratives, we will examine ancient literature and literary theory, and then root these processes in cognitive theory.

The notion that narratives are designed for the reader's (hearer's) experience can be demonstrated in both theory and practice in the ancient Greek world. Plato may be summarized as stating that poets "aim at drawing us into their presentation by making us imagine ourselves as participants in the action."³ Aristotle wrote that the author "should so far as possible visualize what is happening ... as if one were actually present in the events themselves."⁴ Such a storyworld creates an experience where "anyone who hears the events which occur shudders and feels pity at what happens."⁵ Similarly, Longinus states

2 Anthony Thiselton, "Parables, 'World' and Eventful Speech: 'The Parables as Language-Event: Some Comments on Fuchs's Hermeneutics in the Light of Linguistic Philosophy,'" in *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, compiled by Anthony Thiselton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 420.

3 G.R.F. Ferrari, "Plato and Poetry," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Classical Criticism*, vol. 1, ed. George Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1989), 134.

4 Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 55a.

5 Ibid., 53b. Also cf. Horace: "It is not enough for poems to be beautiful; they must be affecting, and lead the heart of the hearer as they will" (Horace, *The Art of Poetry*, transl. Walter Bate,

about poetic writing: “You think you see what you describe, and you place it before the eyes of your hearers.”⁶ Jonas Grethlein cites a telling example from the Hellenistic novel *Ethiopica*, where a character *in that novel* states: “Even now, I fear for Thagenes and beg you to make haste and tell me whether he was proclaimed victor.”⁷ Similarly, the Hellenistic Stoics thought that literature resulted in “the ‘presentation’ of image to the mind of a thinker or writer and through a text to a reader.”⁸ In short, literary narratives were understood as experiences, not as lessons.

This ability, to construct and experience an imagined world, is grounded in the human capacity to run mental simulations. In early hominids, this capacity was developed to test counterfactuals in the interest of survival.⁹ Stephen Mithen uses the example of coordinated hunting in pre-linguistic hominids, where different roles were assigned to each hunter:

For such communication to have worked among Early Humans, each individual mind would have needed to imagine the scenario of co-operation, and their own specific role within it. In effect, *a narrative would need to be imagined*—who would be the trackers, where and how the animals would move, who would be the beaters, who would strike the animal, what would be the danger and what the payoff.¹⁰

Another central example is the parent-infant relation. Humans have few young, using the survival strategy of extensive parental care to bring offspring to adult-

in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev. ed. Hazard Adams [Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1992], 69).

6 Longinus, *On The Sublime*, trans. W.R. Roberts, in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev. ed. Hazard Adams (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1992), xv.1; actual author unknown.

7 Jonas Grethlein, “Is Narrative ‘The Description of Fictional Mental Functioning,’” *Style* 49, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 271, accessed Sept. 9, 2015, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost; Grethlein adds: “The immersion of the reader is explicitly expressed” (Ibid.).

8 George Kennedy, “Hellenistic Literary and Philosophical Scholarship,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1: Classical Criticism, ed. George Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 210. He notes that Philo drew on this mode of presentation (Ibid., 213).

9 Cf. Stephen Mithen, “The Evolution of Imagination: An Archeological Perspective,” *Substance: A Review of Theory & Literary Criticism* 30, no. 1/2 (2001): 41, 45, accessed Feb. 8, 2016, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost. Similarly, Brett Cooke and Clinton Machann, “Applied Evolutionary Criticism,” *Style* 46, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2012): 279–280, accessed Sept. 27, 2015, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

10 Mithen, “The Evolution of Imagination,” 40; italics added. Mithen is addressing communication in the form of gestures, facial expressions, and mime, in hominids between 1.8 million and 300,000 years past.

hood. In this strategy, parents needed to understand their infant's preverbal responses in order to meet the needs of hunger, pain, or cold.¹¹ Using the infant's responses, parents would run a mental simulation of the situation to understand those responses, and then test ways of meeting the supposed needs. Most importantly, they needed for the simulation to feel realistic, so as to take the results seriously and respond with urgency. The inputs for such a realistic simulation likely came from embodied forms of knowledge, where the parent utilized the processes of his or her own body to understand those of the infant.

While we will discuss the science of embodied knowledge below, we can list the sources here: (1) emotional empathy, where parents utilize mirror neurons to reproduce the infant's emotion in themselves; (2) motor resonance, where parents utilize their own muscular system to understand their child's movements; (3) facial expressions, where parents attach their child's expressions to their own basic emotions; and (4) situational empathy, where parents imagine how they would feel and think if they were in the child's situation. Together, these give simulations the sense of valid experiences, so that parents and hunters would take the results seriously.

At a later time, mental simulations were adapted to other purposes, such as the telling of stories. As Paul Hernadi writes: "Likewise, the production of fictive stories ... could build on the preliterate capacity of protohumans to plan actions after comparing counterfactual representations of possible alternative futures."¹² Nicole Speer's group performed scans (fMRI) on humans reading fictional stories to see if they used this simulative capacity, and concluded: "The convergence of these results is consistent with the idea that readers construct simulations of situations as they read a text."¹³ Marco Caracciolo applied the notion of embodied knowledge to the reader's use of simulations:

11 Cf. Claire Vallotton, who notes that an infant's hand signing "provides the adults who study and care for preverbal children with insight into their internal worlds" ("Babies Open Our Minds to Their Minds: How 'Listening' to Infant Signs Complements and Extends Our Knowledge of Infants and Their Development," *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 32.1 [2011]: 129, accessed April 18, 2016, doi:10.1002/imhj.20286).

12 Paul Hernadi, "Literature and Evolution," *Substance: A Review of Theory & Literary Criticism* 30.1/2 (2001): 62, accessed Feb. 8, 2016, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost. Cf. Marshall Gregory, "Redefining Ethical Criticism," *Journal of Literary Theory* 4, no. 2 (December 2010): 285–286; Cooke and Machann, "Applied Evolutionary Criticism," 280.

13 Nicole Speer, Jeremy Reynolds, Khena Swallow, and Jeffrey Sacks, "Reading Stories Activates Neural Representations of Visual and Motor Experiences," *Psychological Science*, 20.8, (2009): 997, accessed Jan. 12, 2016, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02397.x. They add: "These results suggest that readers dynamically activate specific visual, motor, and con-

Understanding this passage requires running embodied simulations of the actions described, and these simulations are hardwired in the reader's own body—only in a second moment do we attribute these experiences to a fictional character, in accordance with the textual instructions.¹⁴

In short, readers engage narratives as mental simulations, with inputs that are rooted in their normal way of experiencing the world. This is one of the reasons that narratives—fictional and nonfictional alike—create a sense of realism at the level of experience. Indeed, there are many examples of fictional narratives that were mistaken for reality, and even acted upon, such as the 1938 radio presentation of *The War of the Worlds*. Our suggestion is that the reading-self experiences the storyworld as an actual world.¹⁵ For the simulation to deliver accurate results, the reading-self never asks questions about a story's fictionality, but experiences all storyworlds as real worlds.¹⁶ It is the actual-self, from a position outside of the simulation, who makes evaluations of fiction/nonfiction and imaginary/real. In our example of *The War of the Worlds*, the actual-self missed the cues for fiction, and so evaluated the reading-self's experience as nonfiction.

Turning to the New Testament, Matthew's story about the influence of the moon was designed to create a realistic experience for the reading-self. It was not designed for readers to appraise the moon's effects or to evaluate the miracle's plausibility, as if this were an exercise in history or science. One may examine the effects of the moon in first-century culture, though this is a *pre-reading task*, with the goal of locating such elements in the world behind the text. Similarly, one may critique this understanding from the viewpoint of modern science, though this is a *post-reading task*, and is still not part of the narrative experience. Rather, the story was designed to create an event in which

ceptual features of activities while reading about analogous changes in activities in the context of a narrative" (Ibid., 995). While the simulation branch of Folk Psychology is similar to our proposal, there are certain problems that keep us from fully embracing it, such as how one fashions a resistant reading.

- 14 Marco Caracciolo, "Blind Reading: Toward and Enactivist Theory of the Reader's Imagination," in *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*, ed. Lars Bernaerts, Dirk De Geest, and Luc Herman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), Kindle edition, Kindle locations 1745–1747.
- 15 We will apply possible worlds theory to this issue in Chapter 6, and suggest that the reading-self uses 'modal realism' where the storyworld functions as an actual world.
- 16 This is the case even for Dorrit Cohn's "signposts of fictionality," which are not recognized by the reading-self who is in the storyworld, but by the actual-self who is evaluating that storyworld.

readers experience the terror of unseen and uncontrollable powers. It is these meaning bits that readers synthesize into themes and meanings.

However, modern readers often note that New Testament narratives lack this sense of realism—the storyworld does not feel like an actual world. Indeed, virtually all narratives from this time feel contrived and artificial, such as the Hellenistic novels (e.g., *Daphnis and Chloe*) and narratives from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Some would suggest that this is due to cultural differences between the intended audience and the modern audience, such as their belief in spiritual causation versus our belief in physical causation. But this is not the case. Readers have no difficulty experiencing the foreign worlds of science fiction or fantasy, even when they employ magical causation.¹⁷ Rather, the central reason is due to recent developments in narrative technique. Modern readers are accustomed to techniques developed in the last two centuries that create a sense of psychological realism.¹⁸ Without these, narratives seem dull and lifeless to modern readers, though—as noted above—they appeared real and engaging to ancient readers.

How, then, do readers create events and experiences from a collection of words? Readers begin by imagining the possible world suggested by the opening lines of the text. Consider the opening lines of The Parable of the Sower: “A sower (farmer) went out to sow.” From this alone, readers construct the bare origins of the storyworld’s setting, filling in the gaps from their understanding of first-century farming practices (broadcast sowing). When imagining this practice, cognitive science has shown that readers activate the same muscle groups as if they were actually involved in that action—a process called motor resonance.¹⁹ This allows readers to understand the action, as well as make “the

17 Anna Abraham and D. Yves von Cramon have shown that fictional characters may even be more realistic than nonfictional characters (“Reality = Relevance? Insights from Spontaneous Modulations of the Brain’s Default Network when Telling Apart Reality from Fiction,” *Plos ONE* 4:3 [March 2009], esp. 4–6, accessed Sept. 9, 2015, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0004741).

18 These include stream of consciousness narration, free indirect discourse, figural narration, extended inside views, detailed descriptions of physical actions, and interior monologue. Some of these techniques occur in ancient literature, but only sparsely. Cf. Irene de Jong, “The Origins of Figural Narration in Antiquity,” in *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective*, ed. Willie van Peer and Seymour Chatman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 67–81.

19 Anežka Kuzmičová defines motor resonance as “the actual covert movement that has been unequivocally proven to occur when isolated literal (i.e., non-metaphorical, non-idiomatic) sentences referring to bodily movement are processed” (“The Words and Worlds of Literary Narrative,” in *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*, ed. Lars Bernaerts, Dirk De Geest, and Luc Herman [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013], Kindle edition, Kindle locations 2089–2090).

reader feel physically present in the imaginary world.”²⁰ Research even suggests that readers use their own neural processes to understand a character’s goals and use of tools.²¹ These materials suggest that the reading-self is involved and participating in the experience of the event, and so is never outside of the storyworld.

In summary, we have examined how ancient and modern readers assimilate narratives as experienced events from a position inside the storyworld. Our readers may index the text to first-century culture, and so engage in historical, sociological, and anthropologic studies, but instead of stopping at explanations, they use this information to construct the storyworld as a realistic simulation. The reading-self enters the storyworld as a first-person presence, so that uptake of the event occurs as an experience. As this capacity was developed in early hominids for counterfactual testing, its adaption to the narrative process retained the feel of realistic events, so that the results would be taken seriously. This explains why narratives have the capacity to reshape the reader’s reality. Indeed, multiple studies have shown that narrative persuasion is directly tied to the readers’ entrance and immersion in the storyworld, their identification with characters, and their emotional engagements in the situation.²²

2 An Introduction to Identification

During the initial construction of the storyworld, readers stand on the inside edge of that world, without any deep attachments, emotionally or cognitively, to the characters. Some experimental literature leaves readers in this situation. An example is Hemingway’s *Hills Like White Elephants*, where readers stand on

20 Ibid., 2116–2117.

21 Using fMRI, Speer’s group concluded that readers use their own mental processes in understanding “goal-directed human activity, navigating spatial environments, and manually manipulating objects” (“Reading Stories Activates Neural Representations,” 995–996).

22 Cf. Sheila Murphy, Lauren Frank, Meghan Moran, and Paula Patnoe-Woodley, “Involved, Transported, or Emotional? Exploring the Determinants of Change in Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behavior in Entertainment-Education,” *Journal of Communication* 61 (2011): 407–431, accessed Nov 11, 2016, doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01554.x; Melanie Green and Timothy Brock, “The Role of Transportation in the Persuasiveness of Public Narratives,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79, no. 5 (2000), 701–721, accessed Nov 11, 2016, doi: 10.1037//0022-3514.79.5.701; and Melanie Green and Jenna Clark, “Transportation into Narrative Worlds: Implications for Entertainment Media Influences on Tobacco Use,” *Addiction* 108 (2012): 477–484, accessed Nov 5, 2016, doi: doi:10.1111/j.1360-0443.2012.04088.x. Note that these authors use ‘transportation’ for our ‘entrance into narrative worlds.’

the inside edge the storyworld, functioning as an objective observer, passively watching the events unfold.²³ While this kind of narration is commonly found in journalistic reporting, where the author is attempting to present an unbiased account of some event, it rarely if ever occurred in ancient literary narratives.

Indeed, ancient narratives were never designed to deliver a neutral account of events. These authors were more interested in producing a moral effect upon their readers and listeners. Plato begins this discussion by asking: “And shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales ... and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown up?”²⁴ This took literary narratives, fictional as well as nonfictional, down the path of demonstrating usefulness. After all, the Greeks reasoned, why would anyone read a biography unless it was to learn how to live well? As David Aune notes: “For the Greeks, history was the arena in which transcendent values were exemplified in exceptional individuals and states that could serve as models for the present and future.”²⁵ The same can be said for the biographical elements found in the Jewish literature of Philo and Josephus.²⁶ For this reason, ancient literary narratives, in general, were biased accounts of the events designed to show the virtues of characters.

Furthermore, ancient authors attempted to involve readers with such characters, so that readers experienced their difficulties and responded with their virtues. Readers assigned their way of being in the storyworld to this character, so that they feared what this character feared. Here we are moving beyond a simple entrance into the storyworld, and toward an experiencing of the storyworld through a character who is constructed as already being in that storyworld. Marshall Gregory, in reading *Moby Dick*, describes the experience as follows: “Imagine your name to be Ishmael and it will be about you ... you will learn to live as if my heart beat in your chest, as if your ears answered to my name.”²⁷ Alan Palmer ties this to the experience of “fictional minds” that

23 This is objective narration, where the narrator describes the events as if a neutral observer, without giving inside information about the characters (Genette’s “external focalization”).

24 Plato, *The Republic*, 11.377, in *Philosophies of Art and Beauty*, tr. Benjamin Jowett, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 9.

25 David Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 64; cf. 36. Craig Blomberg states it bluntly: “The idea of preserving a dispassionate chronicle of events for posterity—with no necessary lessons to be learned from it—is largely a modern invention” (“The Historical-Critical/Grammatical View,” in *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*, ed. Stanley Porter and Beth Stovell [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012], 33, Kindle edition).

26 Cf. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 42.

27 Marshall Gregory, “Ethical Criticism: What It Is and Why It Matters,” *Style* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 194, accessed Aug. 8, 2013, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

readers construct from the text, and suggests that readers “enter storyworlds primarily by attempting to follow the workings of the fictional minds contained in them.”²⁸

In modern literary theory, this type of bonding is usually termed ‘identification.’ Jonathan Cohen defines identification as “a process that consists of increasing loss of self-awareness and its temporary replacement with heightened emotional and cognitive connections with a character.”²⁹ Robert Gordon, using a model from folk psychology, states that there is a change in indexicals, where the reader comes to see the “I” of a character as now referring to him or herself.³⁰ Indeed, Lennard Davis suggests that readers have a primordial desire to identify with characters, and novels “are designed to entice us to identify with them ... the form of the novel itself evokes identification.”³¹ Linda Parsons has even demonstrated identification in children, as where a fourth-grade child stated: “Sometimes it’s like you’re inside the person and you’re kind of visualizing it and seeing it through their view. It’s kind of like you’re inside the character.”³² Our proposal is that the central mechanism for entering and experiencing storyworlds is identification, where readers assign their way of being in the storyworld to a particular character, so that their uptake of events occurs through this character’s goals, interests, worldview, and emotions.

This notion of identification can be demonstrated in ancient literature and literary theory as far back as Plato. Andrea Nightingale writes: “According to Plato, when we identify with a literary character, we abandon our internal integrity and take on the ideas and feelings of others ... we ‘assimilate’ ourselves to another person.”³³ Indeed, Hans Jauss sees identification as occurring in all cultures: “The history of literature provides in all ages examples of this devel-

28 Alan Palmer, “Social Minds in Fiction and Criticism,” *Style* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 202, accessed Jan. 13, 2016, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost. Palmer generalizes his conclusions to the point that narratives are the presentation of fictional minds, which seems overly reductionistic.

29 Jonathan Cohen, “Defining Identification: A Theoretical Look at the Identification of Audiences with Media Characters,” *Mass Communication & Society* 4.3 (2001): 251.

30 Robert Gordon, “Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator,” *Ethics* 105, no. 4 (July 1995): 734.

31 Lennard Davis, *Resisting Novels* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 127.

32 Linda Parsons, “An Examination of Fourth Graders’ Aesthetic Engagement with Literary Characters,” *Reading Psychology* 34 (2013): 18, accessed Feb. 6, 2016, doi: 10.1080/02702711.2011.566762. She notes that children have several basic ways of engaging characters.

33 Andrea Nightingale, “Mimesis: Ancient Greek Literary Theory,” in *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. Patricia Waugh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 42–43. Similarly, Ferrari, “Plato and Poetry,” 116; also see 109, 111.

opment from admiring to sympathetic identification.”³⁴ Hence, while much modern literary theory avoids the notion of identification, usually under a preference for aesthetic distance,³⁵ our suggestion is that ancient narratives were neither designed by the author nor approached by readers in this way.

In ancient literature, the most telling examples of identification occur in the genre of tragedy. Readers might wish to dissociate from Oedipus, as they see the disaster looming on the horizon, to avoid the associated emotional distress. It is only through the maintenance of this bond that readers develop *the enduring emotional attachments that make this genre possible*. Readers stay with this character, usually under the hope that the character will reform or the situation be redeemed, but they do not dissociate from Oedipus and identify with a different character. As Jauss summarizes Aristotle: “Catharsis occurs when the spectator of tragedy can place himself so completely in the position of the undeservedly suffering hero that he fears for that hero what he would otherwise only fear for himself.”³⁶

The reason that identification occurs in such diverse audiences is rooted in our biological heritage. As noted earlier, parents run mental simulations to understand their infant’s behavior. Only parents do not run these simulations from a theoretical or disinterested position, such as: ‘Hungry children cry, my child is crying, so my child must be hungry.’³⁷ Rather, parents run it with ‘child-as-me,’ so as to make the experience that of the parents themselves. In short, parents assign their way of being in the simulation to that of the infant, so that *in the simulation there is no distance between the two*. This is the central experience of identification, which produces a personal and participatory engagement in the event. Thus, we root identification in the original human need for mental simulations to be experienced with immediacy.

34 Hans Jauss, “Levels of Identification of Hero and Audience,” *New Literary History* 5, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 307. He writes: “What interests us here is ... the various levels of reception on which the spectator, listener, or reader, *in earlier periods or still today*, can identify with a hero” (ibid., 284; italics added).

35 This was initially rooted in a disinterested aesthetics that privileged literary formalism, and was picked up in New Criticism, structuralism, and early narrative criticism. At a later time, feminist critique recognized the problem of identification with male characters, and so suggested resistance and distance (see text). This was followed by other types of ideological, cultural, and political criticisms. In our staged reading design, identification is used in the initial reading, while methods utilizing resistance occur as second readings, as designed to critique the initial reading.

36 Ibid., 287–288.

37 This represents the ‘theory-theory’ branch of folk psychology, as opposed to our emphasis on the ‘simulation’ branch.

However, most readers of the biblical narratives do not experience this type of identification. This is because of the unique way that biblical texts are read. Beginning in the early church, lectionary readings chopped the text into segments which became disconnected from the rest of the narrative. The historical-critical method furthered this, by cutting organic narratives into separate pericopae. Both have the effect of keeping the narrative snippets so short that readers are unable to invest in the characters. The techniques used to foster identification, as discussed in the next chapter, require long stretches of text. Indeed, the reader of a single pericope from the middle of a narrative, may well bond to a different character than the author planned, and so break with the design of the whole text.

Since identification is a literary convention, it represents a standardized way of reading that is activated by cues, much as genre is activated by textual cues. When modern readers encounter the cue: "Once upon a time," they recognize a genre marker for the fairy tale, and apply the design of this genre to the entire story. This is why authors don't explain the conventions of the fairy tale to their readers: they assume that any reader from the intended audience will automatically apply the appropriate design, constraints, and interpretation. In short, the cue functions as a shortcut to the literary convention, and the literary convention structures the readers' approach to the text. In the same way, identification allows the author to create a bond between the reading-self and a particular character without having to explain this process to the reader.

Finally, there is an ethical problem with the notion of identification. Readers who identify with the protagonist may find themselves assuming beliefs or performing actions to which they are opposed. We will address this in Chapter 7, as it involves issues in understanding literary event. Here we simply note that the reading-self identifies with a character in the simulation, but *the actual-self exists outside of the simulation and never becomes any character*. The simulation mechanism allows the reading-self to test and evaluate all types of characters, including offensive ones. Indeed, in the Gospel of Mark, the reading-self experiences what it is like to be a disciple who lacks faith, excludes children, and abandons Jesus. The case is similar when identifying with the protagonists in *Macbeth* (Shakespeare) and *Emma* (Austen). But the actual-self does not identify or experience the storyworld; indeed, the actual-self evaluates and critiques these perspectives.

In summary, identification with a character is the most common way, though not the only way, of entering the storyworld and experiencing the events. In identification, readers develop a deep grasp of that character's inner world and experience events from that character's perspective. Cohen suggests a key distinction between *reading with identification*, where readers "experience the text

from that character's perspective," and *reading as spectatorship*, where readers are "positioned outside of the text."³⁸ Identification even occurs when the author employs a flawed protagonist—readers still take in the events through this character's interests, goals, emotions, and thoughts. This means that identification describes a relation between the reading-self and a character, but does not mandate how that character is evaluated. Finally, a number of New Testament scholars have used identification as part of a reading strategy, though their definitions for identification vary widely.³⁹ In the following sections, we turn to characterize this process and address these differences.

3 Identification and Character Construction

When readers identify with a character, they assign their way of being in the storyworld to this character. Should the text state that this character is feeding pigs (Parable of the Prodigal Son), readers do not exit the storyworld and refuse to perform this act. While the actual-self might well have refused to feed swine, the reading-self lacks an executive function, and so acts as the text directs. But before delineating this process further, we must spend a few moments on how characters are constructed.⁴⁰

Readers do not begin the construction of a character *ex nihilo*, with only the elements that the narrative posits. If the opening line reads: "Haley walked into the store," readers do not imagine a pair of feet entering the store. Rather, readers project the image of a representative woman from that culture, and so fill in the gaps left by the text. As Herbert Grabes notes, readers create characters "in our own or somebody else's image, while pretending that they were

38 Cohen, "Defining Identification," 251, 254.

39 Cf. Elizabeth Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 117, 197; David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story*, 2d ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), 103, 139; Peter Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20–21; Gary Yamasaki, "Point of View in a Gospel Story: What Difference Does It Make? Luke 19:1–10 as a Test Case," *JBL* 125, no. 1 (2006): 95–96; Robert Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role," *JR* 57 (1977): 386–405; Robert Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 70–73; Mark Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 56–57; Joanna Dewey, "Point of View and the Disciples in Mark," *Society of Biblical Literature 1982 Seminar Papers*, ed. K. Richards (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982): 97–106.

40 For a brief summary of the various means of character construction, see Uri Margolin, "Character," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 66–79.

‘in’ and have come ‘out of’ the text.”⁴¹ When the text states that Jesus “went to the synagogue on the Sabbath,” first-century Jewish readers construct a character with their own symbolic universe, where the Sabbath represents sacred time, and ‘going to the synagogue’ represents an action appropriate to sacred time. From the very beginning, there are no incomplete characters in the story-world.⁴² The text may have gaps in its description of a character, but the reader’s initial projection of that character does not. Indeed, the initial character is not even completely fictional, but represents a mimesis of the intended audience.

The default assumption, here, is that authors provide the important elements of characterization, so that filling the remaining gaps does not shift the central meaning. As Grabes notes: “Unless we have been expressly informed otherwise, we tend to imagine that *Homo Fictus* will be exactly like *Homo Sapiens*; so the author can ... leave out everything he does not want to emphasize.”⁴³ While this is generally the case, authors still expect readers to provide critically important elements, such as why the Levite crossed by on the other side of the road (Parable of the Good Samaritan), and why the servant drew his sword (scene of Jesus’ arrest). So, a better description is that authors provide the necessary elements and expect readers to fill the gaps with the general characteristics of the intended audience.

This construction of characters even includes that culture’s grasp of ‘self.’ As Grabes notes, readers must “take into account the personality theories prevalent within the culture.”⁴⁴ The New Testament was written to a culture that utilized a dyadic notion of identity, so that group identities—as well as the means of enforcing these—are part of this construction.⁴⁵ As John Onians comments on the Hellenistic period: “One of the most important implications of the basic attitude is that individuality is regarded as a defect rather than as a quality.”⁴⁶

41 Herbert Grabes, “Turning Words on the Page into ‘Real’ People,” *Style* 38.2 (Summer 2004): 232, accessed Sept. 25, 2015, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost. Palmer suggests that character construction begins with a series of “default assumptions,” one of which is: “Characters will think and act in certain fundamental respects like real people” (“*Social Minds*,” 204).

42 As Grabes notes: “Readers or listeners already tend at a very early point to create a notion of the character as a whole and figure it forth” (“Turning Words on the Page,” 225). For Palmer, this provides “the presuppositions that enable the reader to construct continually conscious minds from the text” (“*Social Minds*,” 204).

43 Grabes, “Turning Words on the Page,” 230.

44 *Ibid.*, 232.

45 Cf. Bruce Malina, “Understanding New Testament Persons,” in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 41–61.

46 John Onians, *Art and Hellenistic Thought in the Hellenistic Age* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 33. Onians continues: “The free Greek, who has his behavior ordered by law,

Other central assumptions are that character is relatively stable, and human types exist.⁴⁷ For the modern reader, this means that the construction of New Testament characters begins with these qualities.

However, this is only the initial construction. Character construction is a dynamic process, where the narrative continues to shape each character, so that readers individuate each character in accordance with the text's directions. This is the means by which a character becomes something other than a representative person from the intended audience. If the opening line of a narrative reads: "Robert stepped into a violent storm," readers construct a representative person from their culture, who experiences fear mixed with a desire to find shelter. But if the next line states: "Robert loved the storm, for it reminded him of what it felt like to be free," readers overwrite that initial character with a love of storms. Characters may begin as standard types, but authors often alter these, bending them into more rounded and nuanced characters, or even anti-cultural characters. As Margolin notes: "Authors determine rather than describe the properties of their characters."⁴⁸

In short, character construction begins as a form of mimesis, where readers project a representative person from the culture of the intended audience. Character construction continues, under textual direction, so that readers individuate the character for the text in hand. In this way, characters are sequentially formed by the beliefs, thoughts, emotions, and interests posited by the text. Where the overwriting becomes standardized over many texts, the reader's culture may codify these as character types, such as the trickster, the miracle worker, and the wise person.⁴⁹ But these character types may just as easily be reshaped for the text at hand, and so offer pathways to otherness.

conforms to a common pattern. The barbarian, slave or animal, behaves at random and so differently from everyone else" (Ibid.). Note that this began to break down in the Hellenistic age. Indeed, Lawrence Wills views the Hellenistic novel as "betwixt-and-between the older social order of the tribe and temple-state, and the individualism of the new city" ("The Jewish Novellas," in *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context*, ed. J.R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman [London: Routledge, 1994], 235).

47 Cf. Aristotle's taste that tragedies employ certain types of characters (*Poetics* 2.13) and that characters be consistent (Ibid., 2.15); similarly Horace, *The Art of Poetry*, 70.

48 Margolin, "Character," 68.

49 This notion goes by a variety of names, such as character roles, literary types, stereotypes, model persons (Herman), or scripts, each with a somewhat different emphasis. In its most undeveloped form, these are easily recognized as stock characters.

4 Identification and Attachment

To this point, we have examined identification in general terms. In the next three sections, we pose specific aspects of identification under the headings of attachment, investment, and commitment. In this section, we turn to attachment, which describes how readers take on a character's interests and beliefs for their time in the storyworld. Once readers have identified with a character, they enter the storyworld as this character. Readers do not observe narrative events from some detached, objective, or neutral position that is outside of the storyworld, but experience events through this character's internal, interested, and biased perspective.

Attachment, as a kind of perspective, has three central aspects: the perceptual point of view, the conceptual point of view, and the interest point of view.⁵⁰ First, the reading-self, through this character, perceives objects and events with various senses (e.g., sight, hearing, touching). We will call this a character's *perceptual point of view*. The reader's grasp of these perceptions is fictional: the reader does not actually touch narrated objects or feel narrated pain. Rather, these are understood through the reader's own cognitive systems, as embodied knowledge. Narratives may even pose imaginary senses, which the reader must construct from analogies to normal experience.

In narratives, these perceptions are limited in a variety of ways. Narrated events rarely include information from all the senses, so that the reading-self must fill in any gaps that are required by the storyworld. But more importantly, the character of identification's perception is usually limited to specific areas of the storyworld. Indeed, the narrator may present events of which this character is unaware. For example, in the Gospel of Mark, the disciples function as the character of identification, and yet they are not present at Jesus' baptism. The reader sees the baptism and hears the voice from heaven (Mk. 1:11), and so knows certain aspects of Jesus' identity that the disciples will not have until much later (the voice at the transfiguration, Mk. 9:7). Similarly, the readers are aware of the secret discussion to kill Jesus (Mk. 3:6). Thus, the character

50 Here we are borrowing from Seymour Chatman's terminology on point of view (*Story and Discourse* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978], 151–152). He suggests three: a perceptual point of view involving one's senses, a conceptual point of view involving one's worldview, and an interest point of view involving one's interests and goals. While Chatman's interest is in description, we are applying it to a cumulative character construction. Other classifications for point of view exist, such as that of Boris Uspensky, though we find Chatman's more serviceable to character construction.

of identification almost always has a limited perception that is cordoned off from the reader's more complete knowledge, in order to create special effects (e.g., dramatic irony).

Second, the reading-self evaluates the storyworld's objects and events through this character's worldview.⁵¹ We will call this a character's *conceptual point of view*. As examined earlier, worldview describes the cultural system used to attach meaning to objects and events. This worldview is not initially given in the text, for authors simply assume that readers begin with that of the intended audience. For the reader, character construction begins as a mimesis of the intended audience, so that this character is imbued with a representative conceptual point of view. When readers encounter Levi (Mk. 2:14), they employ that culture's grasp of toll-collector, and assign the meaning of 'dishonorable person.'

But this is only the initial conceptual point of view. Overwriting occurs throughout the narrative, as the text individuates this character, controlling how his or her worldview differs from the existing cultural worldview. The text may do this explicitly by directly stating a new conceptual element, or implicitly by only showing and implying one. Explicit shifts are usually critical elements in the narrative, as the author has resorted to direct telling in order to ensure that the element is correctly grasped. These are especially noticeable when they move against the grain of culture, as when Jesus "declared all foods clean" (Mk. 7:19). But implicit shifts are far more common. When Jesus allows for reaping on the Sabbath, it implies that this kind of reaping is not 'work,' as in the usual worldview. Each of these shifts overwrites the reading-self's worldview, so that the reading-self sequentially becomes 'other' with respect to the intended audience and the actual-self.

Third, the reading-self evaluates the storyworld's events in accordance with this character's goals and interests. We will call this the character's *interest point of view*. When the disciples argue over "who is the greatest" (Mk. 9:34), they reveal an interest in power and status, and this overwrites any initial interests. When these reshaped disciples come upon a person who infringes on their status—the foreign exorcist—they attempt to stop him, not out of any genuine concern for the exorcist or the victims, but only because "he was not following

51 Ansgar Nünning calls this "character-perspective," and describes it as "an individual's fictional system of preconditions or subjective worldview—the sum of all the models he or she has constructed of the world, of others, and of herself" ("On the Perspective Structure of Narrative Texts: Steps Toward a Constructivist Narratology," in *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective*, ed. Willie van Peer and Seymour Chatman [New York: State University of New York Press, 2001], 211).

us" (Mk. 9:38; cf. 10:13–16). Once a character's goals and interests are made clear, readers interpret that character's actions and evaluate the storyworld's events in accordance with these.

The construction of a character's interest point of view also utilizes overwriting, and new elements may be posed explicitly or implicitly. Explicit shifts occur where the interests and goals are directly stated. Examples include Pilate wishing "to satisfy the crowd" (Mk. 15:15), Jesus praying "not what I want, but what you want" (Mk. 14:36), and the disciples arguing over "who is greatest" (Mk. 9:34). Implicit shifts occur when a character's actions are presented, but not the interests or goals that motivated them. For example, the Parable of the Sower never explicitly mentions the farmer's goals in planting seeds. The author expects readers to fill this gap by assuming the usual goals of first-century farmers, namely, to provide the largest possible harvest for the coming winter. Indeed, this goal brings coherence to the parable's elements. But the author could have implied a different goal, perhaps emphasizing how the harvest would go to a Roman overseer so that the goal would be a limited harvest. Other examples of implicit goals occur where the disciples tell Jesus about Simon's mother-in-law under an assumed interest in healing (Mk. 1:30), and where Peter denies Jesus under an assumed interest in survival (Mk. 14:67–72).

Having examined attachment, as consisting of three points of view, we now turn to the interactions among these. To begin, *a character's interest point of view and conceptual point of view may undergo a coordinated development*. Consider where the disciples pick grain on the Sabbath (Mk. 2:23). At this point in the narrative, the disciples operate under an implicit interest in keeping the Sabbath laws, as no conflict on this issue has yet occurred. This interest was supplied in the initial construction of the disciples, where they were portrayed as religious Jews following a religious teacher (e.g., Mk. 1:21). This means that their conceptual point of view attaches the symbolic meaning of 'work' to reaping, and their interest point of view evaluates work as inappropriate to sacred time.

When Jesus evaluates picking grain for hunger as 'not work,' it shifts their conceptual point of view. Hereafter they can gather grain on the Sabbath, for their interest point of view (keeping the Sabbath) is in line with their new conceptual point of view (reaping is not work). Hereafter, the disciples—and readers with them—will understand actions that meet human needs as appropriate to sacred time, and find confirmation of this in Jesus' healing on the Sabbath (Mk. 3:1–4).

Another type of interaction occurs when *a character's interest point of view comes into conflict with his or her conceptual point of view*. When the disciples stop parents from presenting their children (Mk. 10:13), they reveal an inter-

est in status, as aligned with their worldview that a child “represents the lowest order in the social scale.”⁵² When Jesus corrects them, their conceptual point of view may have changed, but their interest in status and power has not. Indeed, later in the same chapter they jockey for positions of status (Mk. 10:37), and are again corrected by Jesus. Readers cannot but wonder how this conflict will play out in the remaining events.

A final type of interaction occurs when *a character's interest point of view becomes divided*, and so provides the context for internal conflict. When Peter is accused of following Jesus (Mk. 14:66–72), he reveals a divided interest point of view: he followed the arrested Jesus into the courtyard out of an interest in remaining loyal, but then denies Jesus out of an interest in self-preservation. Again, readers cannot but wonder how this internal conflict will continue to play out, and are not surprised when Peter does not appear at the crucifixion.

5 Identification and Investment

The second aspect of identification is investment, which describes how readers experience the mental states of a character. First, we need to distinguish this from attachment. Whereas attachment addresses a character's perceptions, worldview, and goals, investment addresses a character's emotions and thinking. When the disciples see a ghost walking on the sea (Mt. 14:26), attachment details their conceptual and interest point of views: the sea is “the home of evil spirits,” whose desire is “to do them ill.”⁵³ While this might serve as the basis for some emotion, it remains the propositional data of beliefs, and as such is neither the emotion itself nor the experience of the emotion. Investment will supply the emotion of abject fear.

This is also the case for what a character thinks. The prodigal son's interest point of view dictates that he needs to work, and his conceptual point of view that working with pigs makes him unclean. But these do not supply the prodigal's concrete thoughts or conjectures. These will be supplied by investment: “My father's hired hands have enough bread to spare, but here I am dying of hunger. I will get up and go to my father” (Lk. 15:17–18). Similarly, when the son's father has robes and ring placed on him, readers use investment to imagine what the father is thinking.

52 R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 374.

53 Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 423.

Readers grasp a character's emotions through the mechanism of emotional empathy, and a character's thoughts through cognitive empathy. These two mechanisms form the core of investment, and address how people—readers or otherwise—experience the mental states of another person.⁵⁴ Let us address these two mechanisms sequentially, beginning with emotional empathy.

Emotional empathy is the capacity to feel emotions that are not appropriate to one's own context, but to a person that one is observing.⁵⁵ It is, at least partially, rooted in the mirror neuron system of the brain, where the observation of a facial expression automatically reproduces that emotional state in the observer.⁵⁶ Indeed, Singer's group performed scans (fMRI) on people in pain, as well as on observers of these people, and showed that the same emotional pathways were active in both groups. Their conclusion is telling: "The finding of empathy-related activation suggests an automatic engagement of empathic processes when perceiving pain in others."⁵⁷ This empathic response is triggered not only by observing the person in pain, but even through the "mere presentation of an arbitrary cue that signals the feeling state of another person."⁵⁸ These responses are not learned, at least initially, but represent universal subcortical (brain) programs that mature prior to children entering grade school.⁵⁹ This means that emotional empathy is an embodied way of knowing,

54 We will follow the distinction of Adam Smith, where "the term empathy has been used to refer to two related human abilities: mental perspective taking (cognitive empathy, CE) and the vicarious sharing of emotion (emotional empathy, EE)" ("Cognitive Empathy and Emotional Empathy in Human Behavior and Evolution," *The Psychological Record* 56, no. 1 [Winter 2006]: 3, author's parentheses). The distinction between the two is problematic, but is beyond the discussion of this book.

55 On the various definitions of empathy, as tied to psychological theories, see Alfred F. Carlazzi, Kay S. Bull, Lawrence B. Stein, Kelly Ray, and Laura Barnes, "Empathy Theory and Practice: A Survey of Psychologists and Counselors," *The Journal of Psychology* 136, no. 2 (March 2002): 161–170.

56 Cf. Christiaan van der Gaag, Rudd Minderaa, and Christian Keysers, "Facial Expressions: What the Mirror Neuron System Can and Cannot Tell Us," *Social Neuroscience* 2, no. 3/4 (Sept. 2007), accessed June 10, 2015, doi: 10.1080/17470910701376878.

57 Tania Singer, Ben Seymour, John O'Doherty, Holger Kaube, Raymond Dolan, and Chris Frith, "Empathy for Pain Involves the Affective but not Sensory Components of Pain," *Science* 303, no. 5661 (Feb. 20, 2004): 1160. Similarly, Jean Decety and Philip Jackson "A Social-Neuroscience Perspective on Empathy," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 15, no. 2 (April 2006): 55.

58 Singer, et. al., "Empathy for Pain," 1158.

59 Christina Schwenck, Bettina Göhle, Juliane Hauf, Andreas Warnke, Christine Freitag, and Wolfgang Schneider, "Cognitive and Emotional Empathy in Typically Developing Children: The Influence of Age, Gender, and Intelligence," *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 11, no. 1 (Jan. 2014): 71, accessed Sept. 9, 2015, doi: 10.1080/17405629.2013.808994.

in which the other person's emotional state is grasped through the activation of one's own emotion programs.⁶⁰

Here we may also consider the neuroscience of the basic emotions, which are thought to represent universal programs that are automatically activated by signals in the environment.⁶¹ These signals are initially hard-wired, though social learning modifies these throughout life.⁶² As such, basic emotions operate on fast pathways for immediate reaction, in service to survival. If a person is at a zoo and a bear suddenly rushes and roars, these cues will automatically trigger the fear program, and that person will turn and run until higher cognitive processes evaluate the situation as safe.⁶³ Even if a person sees fear in another's face, it will automatically activate that person's fear-program.⁶⁴ While some cultures attempt to mask the outward expressions of these emotions, the programs continue to run so that the emotions are still experienced.⁶⁵

This discussion applies to the mental simulations created by reading narratives. When readers imagine a trigger in the storyworld that would activate an emotion in the actual world, that same emotion is activated in the reader's brain. This means that the emotions experienced in the simulation are genuine emotions, whether the evoking situations are fictional or not. The emotion is then utilized as an input to the narrative simulation. As Caracciolo writes, on the experience of pain in a novel: "It is the reader who enacts this pain before attributing it to the character ... based on the reader's own simulative activity."⁶⁶

60 Gaag et al. write: "We hypothesize that in combining simulation at motor, somatosensory and limbic levels one really gains insight into what is happening in other people ... Through these processes we might translate the bodily and emotional states of others into our own" ("Facial Expressions," 195, 199).

61 Cf. Paul Griffiths: "Each basic emotion corresponds to an affect program stored somewhere in the brain" ("Emotions," in *Philosophy of the Mind*, ed. Stephen Stich and Ted Warfield [Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003], 294; also see 300–301).

62 Cf. Paul Ekman, "Basic Emotions," in *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*, ed. T. Dalgleish and M. Power (Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 1999), 51; similarly Izard, "Basic Emotions," 262, 272.

63 Jaak Panskepp notes that "higher cortico-cognitive systems are able to provide inhibition, guidance, and other forms of emotional regulation" ("Affective Consciousness," in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, ed. Max Velmans and Susan Schneider [Malden: Blackwell, 2007], 125).

64 As Decety and Jackson note: "Viewing facial expressions triggers similar expressions on one's own face, even in the absence of conscious recognition of the stimulus" ("A Social-Neuroscience Perspective," 55).

65 These are called 'display rules.' Cf. Griffiths, "Emotions," 266.

66 Caracciolo, "Blind Reading," Kindle locations 1807–1808; cf. 1816–1818.

Furthermore, these responses, in their most elemental form, are universal in nature. Susan Keen goes so far as to state: "The human capacity for primitive empathy, or the phenomenon of spontaneously matching feelings, suggests that human beings are basically similar to one another, with a limited range of variations."⁶⁷ This commonality across cultures suggests that modern readers respond to signals, such as 'crying' or 'a violent storm,' with the same basic emotions of sadness and fear as a first-century reader. As Horace presciently writes: "The human face smiles in sympathy with smilers."⁶⁸

But this is not the case when we move to the use and interpretation of an emotion. These aspects are not universal, but are guided by considerable social learning. A coming of age ritual may have components that evoke grief, loneliness, and pain, but these are not interpreted negatively.⁶⁹ A violent storm may activate the fear program in everyone, but the appraisal of that event will be radically different between modern readers whose symbolic universe interprets it as a physical event, and first-century readers who understand it as a spirit trying to kill them.

Given this general understanding of emotional empathy, we can now examine how narratives employ it. We begin by positing a direct and an indirect form. Direct emotional empathy occurs when a narrative explicitly states a character's emotions: the disciples are afraid of the ghost (Mt. 14:26). If the text posits the emotion, then readers insert the stated emotion into the simulation. Only readers cannot simply manufacture this emotion upon being told that it occurred. Rather, they imagine the fearful expressions on the disciples' faces, and this alone is sufficient to trigger their fear program. In this way, the reading-self experiences fear, even if the actual-self does not believe in ghosts. In such cases, the reading-self's conceptual point of view is overwritten (ghosts exist, ghosts intend to do harm), and their emotions stipulated (fear at the presence of a ghost), so that ghosts are experienced as a real danger.

67 Suzanne Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy," *Narrative*, 14.3 (Oct. 2006): 212. She is only addressing 'primitive empathy,' and notes that such responses are modified by secondary cognitive processing.

68 Horace, "Ars Poetica," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 126.

69 David Herman notes the problems that arise when the reader fails to grasp these emotional systems: "These difficulties translate into a disconnect between the mental and material predicates that must be linked together to construct profiles of persons" ("Character," in *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates* [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012], 130).

The indirect form occurs when an emotion is not mentioned, but is triggered by some cue in the text.⁷⁰ This type of emotional empathy is far more common, and is used to fill gaps in the narrative. Indeed, Palmer makes the bold claim that “the ability to follow fictional mental functioning is *always* necessary for narrative comprehension.”⁷¹ In its simplest form, a narrative contains a trigger that activates an emotion program. This usually involves the reader’s imagining a facial expression (crying, smiling), a stereotyped action (kiss, shaking one’s fist), or a sound (yelling, cooing), though there are an abundance of minor stimuli, ranging from visualizing blood to snakes.⁷² When the text states that Jesus “began to weep” (Jn. 11:35), readers imagine the facial expression, and this activates their ‘sadness’ program. In the same way, emotion programs are triggered by: Antiochus “smiled at them” (4 Macc. 8:4–5), Cain’s “countenance fell” (Gen. 4:5), Jonathan’s “eyes brightened” (1 Sam. 14:26), and the prodigal’s father “kissed him” (Lk. 15:20). Each of these activate matching emotions in readers. Indeed, an author may even play with these associations, using a trigger for one emotion, while stating that a different one is present. Such routinely occurs when employing deception, as where Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss. The point is explicitly made in the Lukan version, where Jesus replies: “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man” (Lk. 22:48).

In its more complex form, indirect emotional empathy is activated through combinations of learned cues in the narrative. Daniel Barratt uses the example of a climber who is about to fall to his death, and notes: “You would cognitively appraise the situational meaning with respect to your goals and concerns, and you would respond fearfully.”⁷³ This is usually called situational empathy, where readers map their prior learning onto the narrative elements. For example, the image of ‘birds eating seeds’ creates little in the way of emotional responses, but when this occurs throughout a farmer’s field in a subsistence culture, and is emphasized by the loss of plants due to inadequate soil and weeds, then it fos-

70 Grethlein notes: “Narratives that avoid revealing the inner lives of characters provoke the reader into inferring their feelings and motives” (“Is Narrative,” 276).

71 Palmer, “Social Minds,” 204, author’s italics.

72 On the emotions attached to smiling, cf. James Russell, Jo-Anne Bachorowski, and Jose-Miguel Fernandez-Dols, “Facial and Vocal Expressions of Emotion,” *Annual Review of Psychology* (2003): 329–349, accessed April 11, 2017, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost. On the fear of snakes, cf. Vanessa LoBue and Judy DeLoache, “Detecting the Snake in the Grass: Attention to Fear-Relevant Stimuli in Adults and Children,” *Psychological Science*, 19.3 (2008), accessed Feb. 18, 2016, doi:doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02081.x.

73 Daniel Barratt, “Tracing the Routes to Empathy: Association, Simulation, or Appraisal?” *Film Studies* 8 (Summ. 2006): 40. These appraisals are rooted in the conceptual and interest point of views, though such do not provide the emotional response.

ters the emotions of fear, despair, and anger (Parable of the Sower). The author constructs the text with the expectation that any reader from the intended audience would experience just these emotions.

Because of the social learning involved, situational empathy may have idiosyncratic effects which are unique to each reader or culture. However, this conclusion needs tempering, as social learning is not necessarily unique to the individual. Some elements of human experience are so common, even across cultures, that they are recognized as human universals.⁷⁴ Hunger and sickness are common experiences, and generate relatively common emotional responses. Joseph Carroll concludes that an author “makes use of all these aspects of our universal human nature. He presupposes that readers will intuitively understand them and respond to them with spontaneous and predictable emotions.”⁷⁵ Indeed, some of these are so important to survival that they obtained a genetic basis in humans. As Mithen notes: “Evolutionary psychology provides persuasive arguments that our minds have had many of the ‘rules of nature’ embedded in them by natural selection.”⁷⁶

Nevertheless, the concern over idiosyncratic responses remains problematic. Readers may formulate an emotional response to some danger, but how do they know that they have functioned as the intended audience in assigning the appropriate emotion (e.g., fear), as well as the appropriate intensity of that emotion (fear along a scale from ‘concerned’ to ‘terrified’)? Readers evaluate the adequateness of their responses just as they evaluate any cultural system, that is, through the recognition of textual resistance. For example, in Jn. 9:19, the parents of the blind man declare ignorance about his healing out of their “fear of the Jews.” This fear is so intense that these parents are even unwilling to address how he was healed. In modern society, where people frequently switch group affiliations and emphasize individuality, this fear seems out of place, producing textual resistance for modern readers (technically, this is a cross-cultural disjunction). Only by returning to the culture of the intended

74 Raymond Gibbs and Nicole Wilson have shown that bodily experiences, such as hunger, generate linguistic metaphors that are consistent across the cultures they studied (“Bodily Action and Metaphorical Meaning,” *Style* 36.3 [Fall 2002]: 532–534, accessed June 10, 2015, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost). Marshall Gregory compiles a list of such motives, actions, and existential conditions (*Shaped By Stories* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2009], 45–46).

75 Joseph Carroll, “Meaning and Effect in Fiction: An Evolutionary Model of Interpretation Illustrated with a Reading of ‘Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge,’” *Style* 46, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2012): 312.

76 Mithen, “The Evolution of Imagination,” 30. Similarly with instinctual fears.

audience, with its use of collective identities and the socio-religious means of enforcing the same (as occurs in this example: Jn. 9:34), does the severity of this fear seem appropriate.

Finally, it is critical to note that emotional empathy is not identical to identification, but only a component of it. Empathy is tied to cues, such as facial expressions over pain, but once that cue, trigger, or distress is removed, the emotional distress slips away. Hence, empathy is temporary and cannot sustain any bond beyond the immediate situation. But identification extends throughout the entire narrative, so that readers continue having uptake of events through this character's interests, goals, and emotions.

Let us pause to summarize the discussion on emotional empathy before turning to cognitive empathy. When readers identify with a character, they enter the narrative events through this character's position, and so experience events through this character's emotional responses. As Robinson summarizes: "Very often, important facts about the characters and events depicted in a novel or painting are made manifest to us through our emotional responses to them."⁷⁷ For the basic emotions, these responses are rooted in universal emotion programs in the brain, with the responses fed as inputs into the mental simulation. This explains why readers from the intended audience generally respond with similar emotions to the narrative's events.

Having discussed the emotion component of investment, we now turn to the thought component. When readers identify with a character, they think that character's thoughts from that character's position in the text. As Georges Poulet writes: "I am thinking the thoughts of another ... there would be no cause for astonishment if I were thinking it as the thought of another. But I think it as my very own."⁷⁸ This falls under the term cognitive empathy, which is the capacity for mental perspective-taking, where readers imagine the mental states of someone else, including that person's beliefs, goals, interests, thoughts, plans, and reasons for action.⁷⁹ Some of these elements fall under attachment (beliefs, goals, and interests) and as such are not the focus here. Instead, we will use

77 Jenefer Robinson, "The Emotions in Art," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 186.

78 Georges Poulet, "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 44.

79 Smith notes that cognitive empathy "enables humans to understand and predict the behavior of others in terms of attributed mental states ... facilitates conversation and social expertise ... guides the behavior of parents as they nurture their children ... helps us to manipulate or deceive people" ("Cognitive Empathy and Emotional Empathy," 4).

cognitive empathy in a more restricted sense, as the capacity to imagine a character's thinking, planning, and reasoning.

For example, when the prodigal son is feeding the pigs, readers understand this as degrading and unclean work undertaken for survival (attachment). Readers even feel this character's disgust at engaging in such degrading work (emotional empathy). But when the text shifts to interior monologue of the son's thinking (Lk. 15:17), readers use cognitive empathy to assume this character's thoughts. Similarly, when the father sees the prodigal approaching in the distance, readers use emotional empathy to posit what the father is feeling, but cognitive empathy to posit what the father is thinking and how he is going to act—hence the reader's surprise when the father runs to this wayward child.

Cognitive empathy, as opposed to emotional empathy, is a slower response that involves higher cortical centers.⁸⁰ As cognitive empathy is necessary for general social functioning, it is found in infants, though the program does not mature until adolescence.⁸¹ Cognitive empathy arose out of the twin needs to test alternatives and to understand other humans. Let us begin with an example of each. An example of 'testing alternatives' occurs when a person imagines how a rival chess player might plan an attack. This component has a future-to-situation stance, and so is used to create and test predictions of how another might act. An example of 'understanding others' occurs when one imagines why a person points towards an object. This component has a present-to-situation orientation, as it explains present behavior. Both are necessary aspects of the simulation process.

Humans employ cognitive empathy when reading narratives. Roy Sommer writes that cognitive empathy "has to be regarded as a necessary precondition without which no literary or dramatic communication would be possible."⁸² Marie-Laure Ryan even suggests that the process of supplying explanations

80 Cf. Stephanie Preston and Franz de Waal, "Empathy: Its Ultimate and Proximate Bases," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 25.1 (Feb 2002): 11.

81 Schwenck, et. al., "Cognitive and Emotional Empathy," 64, 71.

82 Roy Sommer, "Other Stories, Other Minds: The Intercultural Potential of Cognitive Approaches to Narrative," in *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*, ed. Lars Bernaerts, Dirk De Geest, and Luc Herman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), Kindle edition, Kindle locations 2893–2894. Sai Li, Xiaoming Jiang, Hongbo Yu, and Xiaolin Zhou note that cognitive empathy includes "an individual's ability to transpose oneself into fictional situations and identify with characters in the situations" ("Cognitive Empathy Modulates the Processing of Pragmatic Constraints During Sentence Comprehension," *Social Cognitive & Affective Neuroscience* 9 [2014]: 1167, accessed Sept. 9, 2015, doi: 10.1093/scan/nst091).

for actions is “a fundamental mode of operation of the human mind.”⁸³ As such, cognitive empathy represents yet another common aspect of understanding narratives, employed by ancient and modern readers alike.⁸⁴ Consider the Parable of the Good Samaritan, where the priest and Levite “pass by on the other side of the road” (Lk. 10:31–32). As the text offers no explanation for these actions, readers attempt to understand them by reconstructing their thinking: did they realize that the man was still alive, did they think that the man would die anyway, or were they concerned about corpse impurity? This is the present-to-situation component, where readers attempt to reproduce the character’s thinking and reasoning. But there is also a future-to-situation component: naïve readers do not know the end of the parable, and so wonder if the priest and Levite will return to the man, or at least send help.

As with emotional empathy, cognitive empathy has a direct and an indirect form. In the direct form, the text provides readers with a character’s thoughts or expectations.⁸⁵ Examples include the prodigal son’s interior monologue (Lk. 15:17–18) and the internal dialogues among the disciples (cf. Mk. 8:16, 9:10, 9:34).⁸⁶ As readers have identified with this character, they think these same thoughts in the simulation.

In the indirect form, the author does not state the character’s thoughts or expectations, but structures the text *so that readers cannot adequately understand the event without providing these*, that is, without filling these gaps in the text. For example, in Mark 11:11, Jesus enters the temple, looks around, and then leaves without explanation. Readers can only understand this by attempting to construct Jesus’ thinking about what he saw in the temple (present-to-situation) and what he is going to do upon returning (future-to-situation). Also consider the arrest scene, where one of Jesus’ followers, without explanation,

83 Ryan, “Narratology and Cognitive Science,” 477. Cf. Alan Palmer, “The Construction of Fictional Minds,” *Narrative* 10, no. 1 (Jan. 2002): 28–46, esp. 36–38, accessed Jan. 14, 2016, doi: 10.1353/nar.2002.0004.

84 This can be shown as far back as Plato, on which see Ferrari, “Plato and Poetry,” 115–116.

85 Classical narratology provides a classification of speech types for expressed thought, such as direct thought, indirect thought, thought report, and free indirect thought. Postclassical narratology tends to focus on such as embedded narratives or the workings of fictional minds. In our model, the reading-self initially functions with the mind of the actual-self, but is serially overwritten with the expressed thought of this character (via the use of various speech types), so that the reading-self increasingly functions as a fictional mind.

86 As the disciples are a group, we must take account of Palmer’s “intermental thinking,” where “the emphasis is less on individuals knowing what another person is thinking, and more on people thinking the same way” (Palmer, “Social Minds,” 219). Cf. Mk. 6:49: “But when they saw him walking on the sea, *they thought it was a ghost.*”

draws a sword (Mk. 14:47). Readers can only understand this action by positing this person's thinking (defending Jesus, starting a revolution), and by wondering what this person will do next (run in fear, call for others to take up arms).

Indeed, authors structure their narratives to guide readers through this process. A character's thinking could be the result of an endless list of desires, interests, and goals. Consequently, if the author wants readers to move in a particular direction, he or she must provide guidelines to limit the possibilities. As Seymour Chatman notes: "A cleverly built-up sense of filter (character's perspective) can help us imagine a character's thoughts even when they go unnarrated."⁸⁷ For example, in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the wayward son has a ring, robe, and sandals put on him, and while the author doesn't narrate the son's reaction, readers are clearly expected to provide this. Now, readers could fill this gap in a variety of ways. Perhaps the son is attempting to deceive the father, in order to obtain the elder son's inheritance and continue his lavish lifestyle. But the author has structured the text to discourage this explanation: the son has undergone a genuine repentance, as revealed in his internal monologue (Lk. 15:18). Thus, his thinking is not expected to include notions of deceit, manipulation, or duplicity. While textual guidelines never provide complete specificity, they do guide readers in specific directions.

In summary, readers utilize emotional and cognitive empathy as inputs to their mental simulations. These mechanisms represent human universals, and so are employed by all audiences. Sommer calls this the "intercultural mind," which is "based on empathy, the ability and willingness to adopt, albeit temporarily, the other's point of view and to engage cognitively and emotionally with his or her perspective."⁸⁸ Identification extends to the deepest levels of experience, so that readers experience the emotions and thoughts of this character.

6 Identification and Commitment

The third aspect of identification is commitment, which describes how readers remain connected to the character of identification. Once readers have assigned their way of being to this character, they have uptake of all storyworld

87 Seymour Chatman, *Reading Narrative Fiction* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1993), 135; parenthesis added.

88 Sommer, "Other Stories, Other Minds," Kindle locations 2831–2833. Cf. Cohen, "Defining Identification," 256.

events through this character, that is, through this character's interests, goals, emotions, and plans. This is the temporal aspect of identification, where readers maintain a bond with a character even when this character is absent from the storyworld. When the Herodians secretly discuss how to kill Jesus (Mk. 3:6), readers do not evaluate this positively, as if from the perspective of the Herodians. Neither do they evaluate this from some neutral and objective perspective, as if it were simply an interesting twist in the plot. Readers have identified with the disciples, and so evaluate this discussion as a deeply disturbing political development—indeed, an evil one—that threatens their existence.⁸⁹

Now, each aspect of identification has a temporal component. The temporal aspects of attachment and investment, when taken in isolation, are always temporary and subject to change. When a character sees an event (attachment), the seeing is limited to that event and may not extend into the next one. When a character feels compassion over another's sickness (investment), this emotion is limited to the duration of the sickness and is no longer felt when health is restored. This explains how a character's distress may engage a reader's empathy, and yet his or her later behavior may cause that same reader to turn away—as occurs in the Rich Young Ruler (Mk. 10:17–22). For this reason, attachment and investment are necessary but not sufficient conditions for identification. Commitment allows for the enduring perspective that is necessary for identification.

Indeed, this enduring perspective is necessary to explain three central narrative effects. First, authors use commitment to create the central perspective through which uptake of the storyworld occurs. All events are filtered through the character of identification, as to how they affect this character's interests and goals.⁹⁰ This is easily seen in our example of the Herodians, where readers evaluate this event from the disciples' perspective. Similarly, when the Jesus encounters the toll-collector Levi (Mk. 2:14), the disciples are not mentioned, but readers still evaluate Levi from the disciples' perspective: he is a hated traitor who is best avoided.

Second, commitment is necessary for certain genres to function. The central example is tragedy, where readers would like to dissociate from the character of identification in order to avoid the emotional pain. But instead of shifting to a different character, they remain invested in characters like Oedipus and Mac-

89 Similarly, in Shakespeare's *Othello*, the evil character (Iago) delivers long soliloquies against the protagonist; readers do not evaluate these from a neutral position, but from the perspective of Othello.

90 Note that the overall evaluative perspective—the evaluative standard—is separate, and will be addressed in the next chapter.

beth, under the hope that the situation will somehow be redeemed. Similarly, our readers remain invested in the disciples, despite their faithlessness in the unfolding tragedy of the crucifixion.

Third, commitment explains why readers stay with a flawed character. It is common for the protagonist to make mistakes or wander down the wrong path, as in David's affair with Bathsheba or in Moses' striking of the rock. Readers do not, however, dissociate from the character of identification, *otherwise that character could never make mistakes*. Rather, readers embark on a strategy of expecting reform. Such is the case with the disciples in Mark. The disciples are ideal characters in the opening chapters, leaving their professions and parents, and even "hunting" (*katadiōkō*) for Jesus when he is absent (Mk. 1:36). But beginning in chapter 4, they manifest flaws: they lack faith (Mk. 6:37, 49–51), desire power (Mk. 9:33–34; 10:35–37), subdue competition (Mk. 9:38), and marginalize the weak (Mk. 10:13). It is tempting to suspect that readers balance the disciples' virtues against these flaws, and so come to a rational decision about staying in that bond. Fowler makes just this interpretive move, suggesting that readers initially identify with the disciples, but are not able to maintain sympathy because they are "stubbornly obtuse."⁹¹

But commitment *is not based on a narrative calculus, as if readers set to balance the pros and cons of staying in the bond*. Naïve readers do not know the end of the narrative, and so expect reform to the very end. The Markan author emphasizes this through comments about the disciples' future faithfulness (Mk. 13:9–11). For this reason, readers stay with the disciples under the expectation of return and reform. Indeed, authors often use commitment to keep readers bound to a flawed character so that they can take readers down problematic religious, moral, and social paths, and so have readers experience the ends of such paths.

Commitment is also the basis for using characters as foils (the use of ideal minor characters to sharpen the reader's understanding of a protagonist). The Gospels are full of ideal minor characters who show genuine faith, insight, and discipleship, and so contrast with the flawed disciples. The point of foils is not to distract readers from the character of identification, but to reveal that character's shortcomings in the presence of the ideal. Wayne Booth examines this effect in *Emma*, where one of the minor characters is "superior to Emma in most respects," so that readers are "always in danger of losing our sympathy for Emma."⁹² He notes Austen's solution: "By showing most of the story through

91 Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, 70. This leads Fowler to pose the reader's dissociation from the disciples (*Ibid.*, 70–71, 78, 80).

92 Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 245–249.

Emma's eyes, the author insures that we shall travel with Emma rather than stand against her." Similarly, Markan readers stay with the flawed disciples, even as ideal minor characters are paraded in front of them. This is especially evident in the Woman with a Hemorrhage (Mk. 5:25–34), where the woman sees Jesus clearly and acts upon this insight, while the disciples ridicule Jesus.

7 Summary

We opened this chapter by examining how literary narratives function as mental simulations, where readers enter the storyworld and experience its events. Initially readers imagine and are immersed in the opening events, and so place themselves on the inside edge of that world. But in the vast majority of narratives, including those in the New Testament, readers enter the events by identifying with a central character. Readers assign their way of being in the storyworld to this character, almost as if this were a natural way of experiencing the storyworld. But there is no natural way to experience a storyworld, so that identification is a contrived effect of the author, rooted in specific narrative techniques (next chapter).

Identification is characterized by three processes: attachment, investment, and commitment. Attachment describes how the reading-self assumes the perspective of such characters, by taking in the storyworld through their senses, understanding the events through their worldview, and texturing the events in accordance with their interests and goals. Investment describes the reading-self's experience of the events, by taking on this character's emotions, thinking, and expectations. Commitment describes how the reading-self stays in the bond of identification, even when that character is absent or flawed, so that uptake continues through this character's perspective.

Readers construct the character of identification by projecting an image of a representative person from the intended audience, though without an executive function, so that this image is overwritten by the narrative's events.⁹³ As

93 Here is the complete process by steps: (1) the actual-self projects an image of him or herself for the simulation; this is the original configuration of the reading-self; (2) the reading-self is overwritten with the culture of the intended audience; this is the representative image of the intended audience, and the overwriting produces the ideal reader; (3) the ideal reader—the overwritten reading-self—engages the narrative's events; this narrows the ideal reader to an implied reader; (4) identification occurs, so that the implied reader—the overwritten reading-self without an executive function—assigns his or her way of being to a character (commitment), and so is further overwritten with this char-

this character assumes new perspectives, the reading-self increasingly diverges from the intended audience, as well as the actual-self, and so becomes a pathway to experiencing otherness. Readers live out the events of another's life, and so are given the opportunity to experience and learn from another possible world.

Finally, constructing the storyworld as a mental simulation, and entering that storyworld through identification, are common ways of engaging narratives. Only because of these commonalities, given certain modifications, do modern readers have the tools to approach New Testament narratives as would the intended audience, and so to produce similar reading experiences. This opens the possibility of reading the text as the author expected, and so of recovering the voice of the author.

acter's conceptual world and interests (attachment), as well as this character's emotions and thinking (investment).

Many Characters, Many Perspectives

Narratives rarely contain a single character, as in the Parable of the Sower. Most are more complex, with many characters, each with his or her own perspective. In this chapter, we examine how readers navigate these complexities by addressing three central issues. First, we examine how readers select a character of identification from the broader cast. Next, we consider how readers engage other characters, for it is only by appreciating their perspectives that depth is added to the interactions and conflicts. Finally, we address how readers evaluate the perspectives of the entire cast, characters and narrators alike, as this determines how readers assess the events.

1 Strategies for Identification

In the last chapter, we examined the process of identification and how this shapes the readers' uptake of a narrative's events. But how do readers select such a character? When the narrative is simple, as in the Parable of the Sower, readers bond to the only character available. Even after the metaphorical transformation of the parable, readers stay with that character. In the Parable of the Sower, readers may recognize that they are addressed in the different types of soil, but their perspective is still that of the farmer: they feel the emotions that loss brings, and so learn how God feels about God's garden.

How identification works in complex stories, with larger casts of characters, is central to our discussion, as the answer determines the type of meaning that readers create. Identification establishes a perspective through which readers understand and evaluate the events of the storyworld. Shifting to a different character creates a different perspective, and so produces a different meaning. Consider what happens when readers identify with various characters in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. If one bonds to the bandit, then the meaning becomes: "It is fine to rob people, as God will provide help." If one bonds to the Samaritan: "Helping others is a priority, even if they are hated foreigners." If one bonds to the priest: "The outsiders are doing a better job of helping than the religious people."

Identification is so crucial to the construction of meaning that authors do not leave this up to chance. They do not even leave this choice to the readers, letting them select the most likable character or the most heroic charac-

ter (though modernist exceptions occur). Rather, identification is based on a narrative strategy that pushes, biases, urges, or impels readers toward a specific character. As Seymour Chatman notes: “We usually make this association unconsciously, in the most ‘natural’ way, but a good writer works hard to prompt us to do so.”¹ Jonathan Cohen is even clearer: “Unlike a purely psychological theory of identification or a conception linked to sociological notions ... identification is defined here as a response to textual features that are intended to provoke identification.”² One only needs to consider narratives that utilize an antihero, such as Shakespeare’s power hungry Macbeth, to see how readers identify with the most amoral of characters, despite the presence of minor characters who are more likable, moral, and charitable. The same occurs in the Gospel of Mark, where readers understand the events from the flawed perspective of the disciples, while ideal characters surround them.

Let us begin with the techniques that foster identification.³ Most importantly, there is no master technique that causes readers to identify with a character, but a collection of techniques that are deployed in specific strategies. The first technique involves keeping a character on stage, at least periodically, throughout the narrative.⁴ This notion, of an enduring presence, is an absolute requirement for commitment to occur. The character of identification may be absent from various episodes, but he or she cannot be a minor character who only appears in one episode. Consider the centurion in the Healing of the Centurion’s Daughter (Mt. 8:5–13), where readers are given this character’s goals, worldview, emotions, and thoughts. Indeed, the text presents him as a model of faith. But this character is gone after one pericope, so that readers do not evaluate the following events—the healing of a fever, the storm at sea, and the arrest scene—from his perspective. As Robert Tannehill notes: “They appear in such brief flashes that they do not allow the reader to shift attention ... and

1 Seymour Chatman, *Reading Narrative Fiction* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1993), 134.

2 Jonathan Cohen, “Defining Identification: A Theoretical Look at the Identification of Audiences with Media Characters,” *Mass Communication & Society* 4.3 (2001): 251, accessed Nov 5, 2016, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

3 Suzanne Keen calls these “techniques of characterization” (“A Theory of Narrative Empathy,” *Narrative*, 14.3 [Oct. 2006]: 216), while Cohen calls them “technical production features” (“Defining Identification,” 261).

4 Cf. Wayne Booth’s discussion, on how Jane Austen keeps the reader’s attention on the flawed Emma, by keeping the minor characters mostly off stage (*Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983], 249). Cf. Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 158.

become deeply involved with these other characters.”⁵ Commitment requires an enduring character.

A second technique is to narrate inside views of a character, by giving direct descriptions of emotions, thoughts, values, or goals. Chatman explains: “Access to a character’s consciousness is the standard entrée to his point of view, the usual and quickest means by which we come to identify with him.”⁶ Inside views create depth in characterization, and this tends to promote bonding.⁷ While the modern novel is known for its detailed inside views of characters, to the point of vivid psychological realism, moderated forms still occur in ancient literature. Markan examples include where the reader is told that the disciples “were filled with great awe” (Mk. 4:41) and “they thought it was a ghost” (Mk. 6:49). Our texts even have rare examples of figural narration, where the omniscient narrator reveals events through the subjective and limited perspective of a specific character.⁸

A third technique is to narrate a tragic event for a character, causing readers to participate in the emotions stimulated by such a tragedy. A personal tragedy generates emotional empathy, and so creates an indirect (non-narrated) inside view. When readers watch the sequential decimation of crops, in the Parable of the Sower, they map their own experiences onto the situation, and attribute a deep-seated fear of starvation to the farmer. When no guests show up in the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Mt. 22:1–14), they attribute anger to the king. Such inside views provide depth of characterization, and so promote identification. The case is similar when readers encounter a thought-provoking event, and so generate an inside view of that character’s thinking. When Jesus asks the disciples: “Why are you talking about having no bread” and receives no reply (Mt. 16:8), readers begin constructing their own answer, as if they were the disciples. This inside view creates depth of characterization.

5 Robert Tannehill, “The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role,” *Journal of Religion* 57 (1977): 405.

6 Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 157; cf. Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 245–249.

7 Manfred Jahn suggests that these aspects promote a deictic shift: “A passage that presents objects and events as seen, perceived, or conceptualized from a specific focus-1 will, naturally and automatically, invoke a reader’s adoption of (or transposition to) this point of view” (“Windows of Focalization: Deconstructing a Narratological Concept,” *Style* 30, no. 2 [Summer 1996], 256; author’s parenthesis).

8 Compare the authorial narration of Mk. 1:29–31 with the proto-figural narration of Mk. 5:25–29. Irene de Jong writes: “The Homeric narrator is quite capable of abandoning his omniscient perspective and looking at events through the eyes of characters” (“The Origins of Figural Narration in Antiquity,” in *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective*, ed. Willie van Peer and Seymour Chatman [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001], 72).

The fourth technique involves creating a good or virtuous character, as opposed to an evil character.⁹ Given two enduring characters that are alike in all other aspects, readers will sooner bond to a virtuous character than to one lacking in virtue. Shakespeare's play *Othello* is a case in point: Iago has more lines and delivers longer soliloquies than Othello, but he is so manipulative and lacking in virtue that readers identify with Othello. Generally speaking, virtue is culturally defined, but to understand how it is deployed in narratives, we must return to character construction.

Virtue, for a storyworld, is initially defined by the social institutions of the intended audience, as projected onto the reading-self (ideal reader). The reading-self uses this standard to evaluate the opening lines of the narrative. But this position is overwritten by the evaluative judgments encountered in the narrative, where the narrator or characters make it clear that certain actions, attitudes, morals, or thoughts are 'good' in this storyworld. If the opening line of a narrative states: "Mr. x stole candy from children," the initial evaluative position judges this as morally corrupt. But consider how this is modified if the next line reads: "But Mr. x had not eaten in a week, while the children were well-fed, and issues of life surely assume priority over issues of ownership." Here the narrator's comments overwrite the opening position. Similarly, the initial position on foods, for first-century Jewish readers, is that certain of these are unclean and polluting. But the Markan narrator overwrites this: "Thus he (Jesus) declared all foods clean" (Mk. 7:19). Hereafter in this storyworld, the virtuous person may consume any type of food.

A fifth technique involves making a character similar to the intended audience, so that he or she is seen as 'like us.' Given a choice between two enduring, readers tend to identify with the character who holds similar beliefs, life-situations, and political views. As Keen writes: "Human beings, like other primates, tend to experience empathy most readily and accurately for those who seem like us."¹⁰ Or, as Tannehill notes: "A reader will identify most easily and

9 Cf. Marshall Gregory's discussion, which explores "comparatively better" characters in a surrounding cast of "fierce, wolfish, and pitiless" characters (*Shaped by Stories: The Ethical Power of Narratives* [Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2009], 155). Judith Gardiner writes on *The Color Purple*: "It is virtually impossible to empathize with Pa, however, who from Celie's perspective is a crude, almost murderous, and incestuous rapist" ("Empathic Ways of Reading: Narcissism, Cultural Politics, and Russ's 'Female Man,'" *Feminist Studies* 20, no. 1 [Spring 1994]: 108).

10 Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy," 214; she then attaches this empathy to identification with characters (*Ibid.*, 216). Cf. Mark Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 56–57.

immediately with characters who seem to share the reader's situation."¹¹ The greater the distance, the more difficult it is for the reader to assume a character's persona. This is especially a problem when employing an antihero, where the author must go to extremes in producing identification, often making this the only enduring character available.

The sixth technique occurs in a similar vein, where characters are created 'like us' by having some human shortcoming. This goes back to Aristotle's notion that the best tragedies use a character with a human flaw or failing (*hamartia*).¹² Hans Jauss expands on this, noting that a perfect hero stands at greater distance from readers than a flawed hero.¹³ Given a choice between a perfect character and a good character with a human shortcoming, readers tend to choose the latter, as they are more like us in their struggles. Such is the distinction between the perfect Jesus and the all too human disciples.

A few other techniques also deserve mention. Readers sooner bond to a round character than a flat one,¹⁴ to a named character over an unnamed one,¹⁵ and to a character attached to first-person narration over third-person narration.¹⁶

As already mentioned, there is no master technique that determines the character of identification, though he or she must be an enduring character. Any other technique may be flouted, as in the use of an antihero, where the character of identification is neither like us nor virtuous. Authors may even create a protagonist who is opposed to the implied author's values, as in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. In short, none of these techniques is sufficient to determine the character of identification. Instead, authors deploy these techniques within a larger strategy, and the strategy is designed to push, bias, urge, or impel readers in a certain direction.

11 Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark," 392.

12 Aristotle, *Poetics*, 53a; cf. Stephen Halliwell, "Aristotle's Poetics," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1: Classical Criticism, ed. George Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 172–173.

13 Hans Jauss, "Levels of Identification of Hero and Audience," *New Literary History* 5, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 290, 307; he uses the term "sympathetic hero." Powell writes similarly, contrasting "idealistic empathy" with "realistic empathy," before applying them to identification (*What is Narrative Criticism*, 56–57).

14 Elizabeth Malbon notes: "Round characters elicit identification in a way that flat characters do not" (*In the Company of Jesus* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000], 11). On the problem of 'roundness' in this period's literature, see fn. 22.

15 Cf. Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy," 216.

16 Cf. *Ibid.*, 213; and Chatman, *Reading Narrative Fiction*, 134.

Three general strategies are especially common. In the first, the author utilizes a single enduring character along with a cast of non-enduring characters. An example is the Parable of the Talents (Lk. 19:12–24), where the owner is found throughout the parable, but the other characters are restricted to one or two lines. Another example is the Parable of the Dishonest Manager (Lk. 16:1–8), where the manager, as an antihero, is the most unlikely character for identification. As John Nolland summarizes: “Caught in his squandering of the master’s goods, the steward retrieves the situation by means of yet further squandering.” But other characters appear to briefly for readers to develop identification, so that uptake occurs through the manager’s perspective.

This strategy allows authors to use a character of identification who is strongly other—one whom readers would normally avoid—for there is only one enduring character for readers to follow.¹⁷ Indeed, it is the usual strategy when employing an antihero. Such narratives often employ ideal minor characters as foils, without concern that readers will identify with them or experience events from their perspective. Narrative histories also tend to use this strategy, where each section has a strong character of identification along with a cast of minor characters.

In the second strategy, authors use multiple enduring characters, but evenly distribute the techniques so that readers do not identify with any particular one. An example would be Hemingway’s *Hills Like White Elephants*, where two characters discuss an operation from different perspectives. Hemingway keeps both characters on stage, but without giving readers inside views or evaluative comments, so that readers are not pushed toward any character. Authors often employ this strategy to explore multiple perspectives on an event, so that readers are forced into an increasingly complex evaluation of the storyworld. This is the most demanding of the strategies, as it requires readers to hold multiple viewpoints in tension, sorting through the issues without narratorial guidance. This strategy does not occur in the New Testament, or in ancient literature in general, largely because ancient literature was keyed to the notion of usefulness.¹⁸ Stories were generally designed to reveal characters for emulation, and not to place readers in enigmatic dilemmas to work out their own morality or ideology.

17 Chatman uses this example: “We identify with Jack simply because he is the one continually on the scene. This has nothing to do with whether or not we care for him on human or other grounds” (*Story and Discourse*, 158).

18 This notion is esp. prominent in Plato, but continues into the Hellenistic period. Cf. George Kennedy and Doreen Innes on Neoptolemus and Philodemus (“Hellenistic Literary and Philosophical Scholarship,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1: Classical Criticism, ed. George Kennedy [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 204, 215).

In the third strategy, authors utilize multiple enduring characters, but deploy the techniques with a predominance for a single character or group character. This gives authors the freedom to develop multiple enduring characters alongside the character of identification, and so to create sustained and nuanced conflict across larger time spans. Authors often utilize this strategy to explore the flawed protagonist, so that readers can experience the consequences of those flaws in the simulation. In such narratives, identification usually occurs early in order to avoid confusion, especially as the other characters may be round, named, and virtuous.

As an example of this strategy, consider Shakespeare's play *Othello*. Shakespeare employs two enduring characters, Othello and Iago. Early in the narrative, he creates Othello with the following techniques: being like us, having a generally good character, manifesting a character flaw, naming him, making his character round, narrating inside views, and narrating some events from his perspective. On the other hand, Shakespeare creates Iago with only a few of these techniques: naming him, giving inside views, and narrating a tragic event. Indeed, he constructs Iago as flat, as having no virtuous elements, and as so manipulative that he is no longer like us. By using this strategy, Shakespeare pushes readers to identify with Othello, even though Iago is given more lines.

Let us apply this discussion to the Gospel of Mark, to see which strategy this author employs. To begin, some scholars suggest the possibility of identification with multiple characters, including minor characters.¹⁹ The central problem in evaluating such claims involves the definitions used. Some scholars use identification to indicate the reader's empathy with a character, a character's point of view, or a general sense of closeness to some character. Using these definitions, identification would occur with multiple characters, as Mark frequently employs round and sympathetic minor characters, texturing them so that readers understand why they act and how they feel. Using the language of the last chapter, authors may develop minor characters with the processes of attachment (worldview, interests, goals) and investment (emotional and cognitive empathy), so that readers not only understand events from their perspective, but grasp the deeper issues underlying the conflicts.

19 E.g., Malbon, *In The Company of Jesus*, 117–119, 196–197; Peter Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, Society for New Testament Studies 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 7, 21. Gary Yamasaki, using a "point of view character," suggests that it may vary with the pericope ("Point of View in a Gospel Story: What Difference Does It Make? Luke 19:1–10 as a Test Case," *JBL* 125, no. 1 [2006]: 105).

But these alternate definitions do not account for how readers engage the whole narrative. Readers do not develop commitment with minor characters, as they are not an enduring presence. They may feel empathy with such characters, as in the Woman with a Hemorrhage (Mk. 5:25–34), and wish for the accomplishment of her goals, but they do not have uptake of later events—the feeding story, the last supper, and the arrest scene—from her perspective. This requires an enduring character. For this reason, we make a distinction between identification, which includes the notion of commitment, and other forms of reader-character relations, which do not (empathy, sympathy, understanding, closeness, point of view, etc.). To use our example from *Othello*, readers may empathize with Iago, when he is not given a deserved promotion, but they still do not identify with him.

Examination of Mark reveals several enduring characters: Jesus, the disciples, the religious leaders, the unclean spirits, and the crowd. As the techniques are not evenly distributed among these groups, this author is using the third strategy, so that the reader must sift through the techniques to locate the character of identification. While readers normally do this implicitly, we will explicitly analyze this as a demonstration. Let us begin with the enduring group character of the unclean spirits. These are occasionally named (Legion, Beelzebub), undergo tragic events (exorcisms, run into the sea), and are even described with inside views (Mk. 1:24). But they are also flat characters, are consistently portrayed without virtue, and are not like the reader. Indeed, their presence inspires fear, their actions are destructive, and the godly man *par excellence* (Jesus) consistently expels them. In the presence of other enduring characters, identification does not occur here.

Another enduring character is the crowd. The text characterizes the crowd as like us (Mk. 1:37), as experiencing tragedy (Mk. 6:34, 9:17), and as demonstrating virtue (they attend synagogue and follow Jesus). The text also provides inside views of the crowd (Mk. 1:22, 9:15, 11:18). However, this group character is flat and undeveloped, with appearances generally restricted to one line, and often functioning only to provide a setting for the pericope (e.g., Mk. 2:4, 4:1, 9:17). This lack of depth and prop-like status renders the crowd an unlikely character for identification.

The religious leaders are also an enduring character. These function as a group character, in that all are opposed to Jesus, though certain distinctions are highlighted.²⁰ The text provides inside views of the leaders (Mk. 12:12, 13,

20 Conflict sections are often tied to specific subgroups (e.g., Sadducees, Pharisees), but are designed to show that all groups are opposed to Jesus.

28, 15:43), portrays them as having virtue from the perspective of the intended audience (maintain the religious institutions, safeguard the laws), and presents them as similar to us (religious people attempting to follow God).²¹ On rare occasions, a member from this group is named (Mk. 5:22) and even characterized by Jesus as demonstrating virtue (Mk. 12:34, 15:43). Nevertheless, Mark generally presents them as a flat, unnamed character, does not narrate any tragedies, and portrays them as opposed to the new standard of virtue: they oppose Jesus' teaching and practices (Mk. 2:6–7, 16, 24, 3:22, 7:5, 11:28), lack insight into the Scriptures (Mk. 2:24–27, 12:24, 35–36), try to kill Jesus (Mk. 3:6, 14:1, 43), and are evaluated negatively by the godly man *par excellence* (Mk. 7:6–13, 12:12, 38–40). These elements open considerable distance between readers and the religious leaders, making identification with this character unlikely.

However, the characterization of the religious leaders is of sufficient depth for readers to understand why they act as they do, and so to grasp the seriousness of the issues at stake. In other words, *conflict with the religious leaders is not gratuitous or about inconsequential issues*, but goes to the core of Jesus' message: how should one act in sacred time, what are the entrance requirements for the kingdom of God, what is the source of Jesus' authority, and how does one deal with religious exclusivity?

This leaves us with the enduring characters of Jesus and the disciples. Both occur as round and named characters,²² have events narrated from their perspective, are described with inside views, and experience tragedies. But there are two clear differences. The first is in the category of being like us. From the beginning, Jesus' experiences deeply diverge from those of readers. At Jesus' baptism, the heavens are split open, the spirit descends upon him, a voice speaks from heaven, and he is driven "by the spirit" into the wilderness. Jesus' actions also differ, as he forgives sins, abrogates Sabbath law, exorcizes demons, and heals people. On the other hand, the disciples are restricted to human actions and events. Even if actual readers would not leave their professions at

21 The intended audience would have respected the Pharisees, seeing them as similar to us in their economic situation, stance toward the law, and response toward Rome. This is not the case with the Sadducees, and even less so with the chief priests, who were often held in contempt by the populace.

22 Roundness, as a category, is problematic in the literature of this period, esp. as the taste of Aristotle is for consistent characters and character types (*Poetics* 2.13, 15). Jesus and the disciples are relatively round, as they have complex traits (when compared to other characters), their actions are at times unpredictable, and their actions reveal some elements of internal conflict (for Jesus, cf. Mk. 14:34–37). On this issue, see Rhoads, et al., *Mark as Story*, 100, 102–104, 123–128.

Jesus' call (Mk. 1:16–20), they would desire to follow Jesus, welcome him into their homes, and go in search of him (Mk. 1:29, 36, 38).

The second area of difference is in the category of having flaws and failings. Jesus is presented as the ideal hero who is virtuous and without flaws. But the disciples are only initially characterized this way: they abandon family and profession to follow Jesus (1:16–20), are amazed at his teaching (1:22, 27), take him into their home (1:29–30), bring the sick and possessed to Jesus (1:32), go out in search of him (1:36), and are included in Jesus' mission (1:38: "Let *us* go to the neighboring towns"). This changes in Chapter 4, where they are characterized as having shortcomings, beginning with a lack of insight (4:10–13) and faith (4:40).²³ Throughout the remainder of the narrative, the disciples receive mixed reviews, as they continue to follow Jesus and carry out his directives, but with increasing lack of insight (8:14–21) and faith (9:18–19), along with an expressed desire for power and position (9:33–42).

This analysis suggests that identification most likely occurs with the disciples, as they are more 'like us' in their actions, humanity, and experiences. Jauss addresses these as different types of heroes, where Jesus is an "admiring" (ideal) hero and the disciples are a "sympathetic" hero.²⁴ While identifying with an ideal, god-like character might seem desirable, the readers themselves are not ideal and cannot fully engage in Jesus' experiences. As Rhoads notes: "The awesome, mysterious, and demanding aspects of Jesus' character keep the reader somewhat at a distance."²⁵ Sympathetic heroes, such as the disciples, are more human, so that their struggles and successes are similar to those of readers. Powell writes similarly about the disciples in Matthew:

Identification with Jesus will be idealistic, in that he represents the perfect model for what the implied reader would like to be ... the character of Jesus is defined by a number of traits that the implied reader could never own ... The best possibility for realistic empathy in Matthew's Gospel is offered by Jesus' disciples. Not only do they usually favor God's point of view, but they are also characterized by traits likely to be shared by the reader.²⁶

However, in the later chapters, the disciples are increasingly flawed. Some have suggested that these failings are so great that readers end up dissociating from

23 Prior to Chapter 4, the only negative comment is about Judas (Mk. 3:19).

24 Jauss, "Levels of Identification," 303, 307.

25 Rhoads, et. al., *Mark as Story*, 105.

26 Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 56.

the disciples.²⁷ These evaluations fail to account for the commitment aspect of identification. Protagonists routinely engage in prolonged errors, but readers do not separate from such characters and look for more suitable prospects. Readers do not know the end of the story, and so adopt the strategy of expecting reform. Indeed, the Markan text emphasizes this strategy by predicting the disciples' future faithfulness (Mk. 13:9–11). Rather, commitment allows the implied author to take readers down erroneous paths, so that they experience the consequences of such errors—a technique that comes to full fruition in the use of an antihero. Thus, readers remain with the disciples, despite recognizing and evaluating their shortcomings, in the increasingly desperate hope that they will reform.

Finally, it is important to note that the disciples are notoriously absent from the final pericopae (Mk. 15:40–16:8). Instead, three women are found, and their appearance is unique. Minor characters in Mark are almost always unnamed, flat, and occur in a single pericope. Quite the opposite occurs here, as these women are found in three pericopae, are named (15:40, 15:47, 16:1), and are round (16:8). Indeed, readers are given inside views of the women (16:1, 5, 8), evaluate them as similar to us (15:41), experience direct emotional and cognitive empathy (16:3, 8), and indirect emotional and cognitive empathy (15:40, 47; 16:4, 8).²⁸ This suggests that the women function as the disciples, taking their place in the narrative. It is surely not coincidental that the women are described similarly to the disciples, in their following of Jesus (15:41) and fleeing in terror (16:8). Our suggestion is not that readers stop identifying with the disciples, for naïve readers do not know if the disciples will reform until the final verse. Rather, readers recognize these women as disciples, so continuing their identification forward in them (an extension of the group character). This is confirmed by the angelic commissioning of the women to “go and tell” (16:7: *hypagō, eipōn*), much as Jesus had commissioned the disciples (3:14, 6:6–12: *apostellō, kēryssō*).

In summary, authors employ specific strategies to push, bias, urge, or impel readers toward identifying with a character. From the readers' perspective, identification may appear to be a natural choice, while in fact it is contrived by the author. In doing so, the author creates a particular experience of the text,

27 Robert Fowler suggests that identification initially occurs with the disciple, but with growing problems, complete dissociation occurs (*Let The Reader Understand* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991], 78, 80). Tannehill suggests a complex relationship between the reader and the disciples, beginning with identification but pockmarked by a desire for dissociation which never comes to fulfillment (“Disciples in Mark,” 392–393, 398–399, 401, 403).

28 The presence of the women cannot be understood without supplying their emotions and thoughts.

by having readers enter the storyworld through this character and interpret the events through this character's beliefs, interests, emotions, and thoughts. Finally, it is important to note that identification does not imply a positive evaluation of that character's actions, for the evaluative standard is lodged elsewhere (see below).

2 Engaging Other Characters

It is easy to give too much or too little attention to the other characters, and especially the minor ones.²⁹ Since uptake is through the character of identification, some pay scant attention to them, and in doing so miss the central roles they play in conflicts or as foils. Other readers study a pericope in isolation from the whole text, so that a minor character in the larger text is treated as the protagonist for that event. Yet other readers, out of ideological concerns, ignore the character of identification (resistant reading) in order to focus on a suitable minor character. However, these pathways do not engage characters as the author expected, that is, as part of a larger design in service to the author's narrative argument.

We begin this section by examining how these other characters are constructed. Readers construct all characters—the character of identification as well as major and minor characters—with the mechanisms examined in the last chapter. All begin as a projection of a representative person from the intended audience. This means that all characters begin with an identical symbolic universe, cognitive maps, and social institutions. All come equipped with arms and legs, senses, a worldview, and emotions.

As soon as individuating characteristics are given in the text, various elements of this generic character are overwritten, so that each character conforms to more specific types from that culture. In the Woman with a Hemorrhage, the female character is simply introduced as “a woman” (*gunē*, Mk. 5:25). Here readers overwrite their generic character with elements of the specific type: first-century Jewish woman.³⁰ Next, readers find that she has a bleeding

29 Malbon notes that the chief difference between the major and minor characters is not that minor characters are necessarily flat, static, or unnamed, but only that such a character “lacks a continuing or recurrent presence in the story as narrated” (*In the Company of Jesus*, 192).

30 Cf. Bruce Malina, “Understanding New Testament Persons,” in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 41–61.

disorder, and so overwrite this character as unclean, out of place, and “dangerous to the guardians of the purity system.”³¹ In this way, readers use the process of overwriting to individuate each character.

To this point, our characterization of this woman has only emphasized objective knowledge, as if formulated by disinterested readers who are uninvolved with the text, similar to a scientist who is observing a physical process. Part of our inheritance from positivism is the avoidance of subjective experience, and the privileging of objective descriptions that are ‘uncontaminated’ by emotions. While this is a virtue in scientific study and logical argumentation, it is not the way narrative arguments are created. Numerous studies have shown that the persuasion of readers involves subjective experience, where readers occupy character slots and experience emotional responses to events.³² Hence, our descriptions must include subjective evaluations, made from the position of the character who is doing the experiencing. Ansgar Nünning calls this a character’s “subjective worldview,” which consists of that character’s “knowledge and belief sets, intentions, psychological traits, attitudes, ideological stance, and systems of values and norms.”³³

In short, each character opens a window onto the narrative, where the elements of the storyworld—including other characters—are viewed from a highly subjective perspective.³⁴ A toll-collector may be presented objectively, without any evaluative comments from the narrator, but each character evaluates him from their own window: the disciples view him as a despised Roman collaborator, Jesus assesses him as part of the expanding Kingdom of God, other Jewish toll-collectors view him as a pragmatically surviving Jew, and the Roman administration considers him an underling from a conquered people. None will be objective or neutral, as each is underlain by that character’s worldview, interests, emotions, and thinking.

Each character’s perspective, including minor characters, is formed using the processes of attachment and investment. As these processes were detailed in the prior chapter, for the character of identification, here we may simply

31 Stuart Love, “Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman,” in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce Malina, and Gerd Theissen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 97.

32 On ‘persuasion’ in narrative arguments, see Chapter 4, fn. 22 and text.

33 Ansgar Nünning, “On the Perspective Structure of Narrative Texts: Steps Toward a Constructivist Narratology,” in *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective*, ed. Willie van Peer and Seymour Chatman (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 211.

34 I’m adopting this term from Jahn, who uses the ‘window’ metaphor (see quote in fn. 7). However, Jahn restricts this term to deictic centers (narrator, reflector), while I see each character as having a similarly defined window.

summarize and apply them to a minor character: the Woman with a Hemorrhage. Attachment involves assuming a character's perspectival point of view (senses), conceptual point of view (worldview), and interest point of view (interests and goals). Readers begin their construction of the woman as a representative first-century Jewish woman, but individuate her by perceiving through her senses ("she touched"), and even her imagined senses ("she felt [*ginōskō*] in her body that she was healed"). These are grasped as embodied knowledge, which are then used as inputs to the simulation. Readers understand her bleeding from her own conceptual point of view, that is, from the symbolic universe and social institutions that she learned from her culture. Hence, they construct her as evaluating herself as unclean, where "what is unclean is abnormal and disruptive of the economy of nature," along with the experienced consequences of being out of place (social and religious isolation).³⁵ Without grasping the woman's subjective evaluation of herself, readers do not construct the appropriate emotions (desperation, despair) or understand the extreme nature of her actions (spending all that she has on physicians, touching a strange man). Finally, readers individuate her through her interests and goals, namely, to stop the bleeding so that she might be restored to her familial, social, and religious communities. This would shift her identity from being out of place to belonging. As Stuart Love summarizes: "No longer would she be 'dirt.'"³⁶

Turning to investment, readers construct her emotions and thinking through the appropriate forms of empathy. The opening lines are designed to reveal her misery, desperation, and hopelessness ("suffering under hemorrhages ... endured much under many physicians ... spent all that she had ... she was no better, but rather grew worse"). When readers visualize her facial expressions, it automatically engages their emotional empathy, and the output of these programs is then applied to the narrative simulation. Readers are also given this character's thoughts, which are narrated in first-person ("If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well"). Readers engage this via direct cognitive empathy, almost as if they were thinking these thoughts. In this way, readers are actively engaged in creating the experience of this minor character.

Authors use these processes to develop a deeper understanding of minor characters, so that their actions are grasped as an appropriate outworking of their underlying worldview, interests, and goals. These characters are then

35 Jacob Neusner, "Purity and Impurity in Judaism," in *The Encyclopedia of Judaism*, vol. 3, ed. Jacob Neusner, Alan Avery-Peck, and William Green (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1110. Cf. Love, "Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman," 85–101.

36 *Ibid.*, 98; Love is using Mary Douglas' terminology.

placed in conflict, where the conflict is understood as an opposition between various worldviews, interests, and goals.³⁷ In the Woman with the Hemorrhage, the conflict is not about the physical interactions between Jesus and the woman, or between Jesus and the disciples. The central conflict is over contrasting views on the identity of Jesus. The disciples view Jesus as only human (revealed in their criticism of his question), exposing their lack of insight on Jesus' identity, and even their blindness to the miracle that occurred in front of them. But the woman views Jesus as more than human ("If I but touch his clothes"), and so sees clearly, as revealed in Jesus' praise of her faith. The expressed conflicts, between Jesus and the woman, and Jesus and the disciples, are designed to reveal this central conflict, and so emphasize the conceptual issue at stake.

However, this discussion has not taken account of identification, and how this shapes the readers' experience of the event. At this point in the narrative, readers have identified with the disciples, and so enter the event as this character. Readers may understand the woman's perspective—indeed, this is necessary to have depth of conflict—but they have assigned their way of being to the disciples. Hence, readers view the woman as unclean, criticize Jesus over his ridiculous question, and fail to see the miracle that occurred in front of them. Within the event, they come to recognize their own blindness to the work of God (the missed healing) and their blindness to the identity of Jesus (the woman as an ideal foil). Identification makes this a participatory experience, so that readers come to understand spiritual blindness and its consequences in their own experiences of the storyworld.

In summary, other characters are initially constructed as a projection of the intended audience and individuated by various steps of overwriting. Each character opens a window onto the events, with an interested perspective. Readers use the processes of attachment and investment to understand each character, so that conflicts can be grasped in depth. But these character-perspectives are not all equal. The reading-self approaches all events through the character of identification, because of commitment, and so grasps events through this character's worldview, interests, goals, emotions, and thinking. Even when readers evaluate this character's interests as corrupt or worldview as erroneous, they retain this character's perspective.

37 This is similar to Lisa Zunshine's "deep intersubjectivity," which is the capacity to hold multiple character perspectives in mind, along with the interactions among them ("Why Jane Austen was Different, and Why We may need Cognitive Science to See It," *Style* 41, no. 3 [Fall, 2007]: 275–276).

3 Interest Bias and Evaluative Standard

Narratives are constructed so that readers evaluate each character's perspective within a broader design, grading some positively and other negatively. This suggests the presence of central evaluations over the whole narrative, which appraise, rank, and organize these perspectives. These structures go by a variety of terms (e.g., focalization, perspective, filter/slant, evaluative point of view), and are normally tied to the mechanics of narration.³⁸ For example, the Gospels are told through an omniscient and reliable third-person narrator who is external to the storyworld, resulting in a perspective that is ranked as authoritative over all other views.

Our discussion has not engaged these classifications, which are part of the structuralist project, but instead focused on the construction of each character's subjective experience.³⁹ Nevertheless, these classifications do point to the presence of larger structures that organize and rank these perspectives. The central issue, here, is how such rankings occur and how they affect the uptake of actions and events. While these occur differently for each type of narrative situation, we will focus on authorial narration, as it is the most common type in our literature.⁴⁰

38 My view may be summarized as follows: for authorial narration (Stanzel), I assume that each character has a point of view in the story world (homodiegetic), while the narrator has a point of view outside the storyworld (heterodiegetic). Because each has a perspective, each looks on the events through a particular window (Jahn), providing separate perspectival colors to the events (Nünning's subjective worldview). While readers use the window of the character of identification for their experience of the storyworld, they do not use this perspective as the ethical standard for the storyworld. Rather, each character's actions and attitudes are evaluated by different structures (interest bias and evaluative standard). Each type of narrative situation deploys these structures differently.

39 Cf. Nünning, who separates "acts of narration and focalization" from "a character's or a narrator's subjective worldview" ("On the Perspective Structure," 207). Carola Surkamp makes a similar distinction between structuralist and constructivist approaches, where the former "designates stylistic facets of narrative discourse," while the latter conceives of perspective "as a character's or narrator's subjective worldview" ("Perspective," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan [Oxon: Routledge, 2005], 424).

40 These are Stanzel's narrative situations, with each type privileging a different point of view. For authorial narration: the privileged interest point of view is that of the character of identification (the interest bias), the privileged conceptual point of view is that of the narrator (the evaluative standard), and the privileged perceptual point of view is variable. We address first-person narrative situation in fn. 59. The figural narrative situation is so limited in our literature that it will not be addressed.

We begin with the notion of ‘interest bias,’ which refers to the central set of interests and goals that readers use to evaluate the actions, attitudes, and plans of the various characters. Each character has his or her own interests, but interest bias identifies the overarching one that readers employ. For example, when the woman with a hemorrhage is moving through the crowd, each character (Jesus, Jarius, the woman, the disciples, and the crowd) see her as furthering or impeding their own goals. But when readers identify with a character, they care about this character’s goals in a way that they do not for any other. This means that the interest bias is located in the character of identification, and more specifically, in that character’s interest point of view. In our example, readers care about the goals and interests of the disciples, and how the woman’s actions further or impede these. Readers see this woman as impeding their group’s mission: she is poor and unclean, she is contaminating everyone she touches, and she is keeping them from the important community leader who can give their group status. For these reasons, readers—in identification with the disciples—expect Jesus to chide the woman and to move on as quickly as possible. Of course, Jesus does quite the opposite.

Also consider Mk. 10:13–14, where Jesus and the disciples encounter children. While children may be viewed from many perspectives, readers appraise them through the disciples’ interests. At this point in the narrative, their interests are in obtaining status and honor (Mk. 9:34), so that before any action occurs, readers already evaluate the children as an obstacle and a hindrance.⁴¹ Hence, the disciples—and the readers with them—attempt to scold the parents and stop the children.

The interest bias has three central features that impact upon the readers’ uptake of narrative events. First, readers make these evaluations automatically, in accordance with the character of identification. This goes back to the construction of the reading-self, who lacks an executive function, and so automatically assumes this perspective for his or her time in the storyworld. When the disciples reveal an interest in status and honor, the reading-self is overwritten and acts accordingly.

The second feature is that the interest bias has nothing to do with the ethical or moral standards employed by the narrative. It is only about achieving those goals, and not their ethical status. Readers may evaluate the disciples’ interests as working against Jesus’ interests, and so as morally corrupt, but they still follow the disciples in scolding the parents and stopping the children. Should

41 On the status of children, cf. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 374.

readers find such interests excessively corrupt, the actual-self will either initiate a resistant reading or put the book down. As Walker Gibson notes, such readers have encountered “a person we refuse to become, a mask we refuse to put on, a role we will not play.”⁴²

The third feature is that the interest bias remains in place even when the character of identification is absent. This is a consequence of commitment. When the Herodians secretly conspire to kill Jesus (Mk. 3:6), uptake still occurs through the disciples’ interests and goals, so that this act is evaluated negatively. When readers encounter Levi “sitting at the tax booth,” the disciples are not mentioned, but uptake still occurs through their interests: Levi is grasped as a despised and thieving Roman collaborator who will contaminate our group.⁴³ Readers, following the interest bias, fully expect Jesus to ignore him, and are shocked when Jesus calls him.

Let us examine two final examples of interest bias, beginning with Judas’ kiss at the arrest scene. At this point in the Gospel accounts, readers have separated Judas from the group character of the disciples, and constructed a separate perspective for him. Readers recognize the emotional meaning of a kiss in this culture,⁴⁴ and so assigned insincerity to Judas’ action. But readers do not evaluate this act positively, as if from Judas’ perspective. Their uptake is through the disciples: they evaluate this as working against their interests and so as an act of betrayal. Also consider the Lukan pericope where the Samaritan villagers refuse to receive Jesus (Lk. 9:52–55). Readers construct the perspective of the villagers, understanding why they refuse (attachment), and even constructing their emotional responses to Jewish people (investment). But readers still have uptake through the disciples, so that the villager’s actions are evaluated as obstructing their core interests. Hence, readers are angered at this shaming, and—along with the disciples—respond in kind: “Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”

42 Walker Gibson, “Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers,” in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 5.

43 Disagreement exists on this point, but we follow Mark Powell: “Thus, the substance of the tradition is ... that he ate with people whom he himself regarded as sinners and with people whom most people of his day would have considered to be inappropriate table companions” (“Was Jesus a Friend of Unrepentant Sinners? A Fresh Appraisal of Sanders’s Controversial Proposal,” *Journal for The Study Of The Historical Jesus* 7, no. 3 [2009]: 299, accessed Aug. 2, 2017, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost).

44 On the possible social meanings, see Adela Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 684–685.

However, interest bias is only one of the larger structures that organizes these perspectives. The other structure is the evaluative standard, which is the overarching perspective that determines the moral rightness of all actions, beliefs, and attitudes.⁴⁵ This can be seen in our discussion of The Call of Levi and the Samaritan Villagers. The disciples' goals may dictate that they avoid Levi and destroy the Samaritans, but in both, the disciples' grasp of the events is evaluated negatively: Jesus recruits Levi, and rebukes (*epitimaō*) the disciples. Readers may wish for the disciples' goals to come to fruition, but they also recognize that these goals are ethically problematic.

We begin this discussion by noting that readers construct an evaluative stance for each character. This is a function of that character's conceptual point of view, which is rooted in that character's worldview. Readers also construct evaluative stances for the narrator and implied author. Nünning calls the latter the "narrator-perspective," where readers attribute "psychological idiosyncrasies, attitudes, norms and values, a set of mental properties, and a world-model" to the narrator.⁴⁶ Thus arises the situation where many character-perspectives, each with its own evaluative stance, open onto the events of the text.

Only these perspectives are not ranked equally. Authors design their narratives to promote or privilege specific ones. Nünning calls this the narrative's "perspective structure," which refers to "the relationships between the various individual perspectives projected in a text."⁴⁷ This structure determines how the various perspectives are arranged, and virtually always in ancient literature

45 Other scholars have noted this evaluative standard. Powell uses the term "evaluative point of view," which he defines as "the norms, values, and general worldview that the implied author establishes as operative for the story ... the standards of judgment" (*What is Narrative Criticism*, 23–24; similarly Jack Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 2nd ed., [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988], 110). Rhoads, et. al. use the term "ideological point of view," which they define as "a system of beliefs and values implicit in the point of view from which the narrator judges and evaluates the character in the story" (*Mark as Story*, 44; similarly James Resseguie, "Point of View in the Central Section of Luke (9:51–19:44)," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25, no. 1 [March 1982]: 42; and Yamasaki, "Point of View," 94). While these generally focus on the same evaluative component, some include mistaken notions: it is not as narrow as 'ideology,' it is not necessarily external to the narrative; and it is not always located in the narrator. Our language will mirror that of Fowler, who identifies this standard with "the dominant conceptual point of view" (*Let the Reader Understand*, 76).

46 Nünning, "On the Perspective Structure," 213. For a characterization of the Markan narrator, see Rhoads, et. al., *Mark as Story*, 43–45.

47 Nünning, "On the Perspective Structure," 209.

(though not in modernist literature) ranks these hierarchically. The evaluative standard is the highest position within this structure, or in the words of Robert Fowler, is the “dominant conceptual point of view.”⁴⁸ As James Resseguie notes: “Though disparate points of view may be expressed on the lips of various characters only one voice emerges as authoritative, giving expression to the underlying ideological point of view of the narrative as a whole.”⁴⁹ So, in the Gospels, the perspective of Jesus is ranked over that of the disciples, and the perspective of the disciples over that of the religious leaders.

Now, how do readers identify the evaluative standard? It might seem that readers would select the evaluative position that is closest to their own, but this is not the case. The selection is dictated by specific strategies deployed in the narrative. As Nünning states: “The reader’s construal of the relationships between the various perspectives is not hit or miss, but follow from certain techniques used to coordinate and to assess the individual perspectives.”⁵⁰ There are three common strategies that authors use in authorial narration.

One strategy, which is common in New Testament literature, is to use authorial narration with a third-person, reliable and omniscient narrator. Here narrators “provide a normative standard according to which all the character-perspectives are judged.”⁵¹ Nünning expands: “The authorial narrative situation usually involves a hierarchical arrangement of perspectives ... with the narrator functioning as a controlling, coordinating, and integrating instance.”⁵² We will call this the ‘narrator-only strategy,’ where the evaluative standard is solely located in a reliable narrator. When conflict occurs over different worldviews, the narrator’s view settles the issue, no matter how reasonable any other view appears. As Seymour Chatman notes:

These distinctions most clearly emerge ... where the narrator is operating under a clearly different set of attitudes than those of the character. Then the narrator’s conceptual point of view (except when he is unre-

48 Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, 76.

49 Resseguie, “Point of View in the Central Section of Luke,” 42.

50 Nünning, “On the Perspective Structure,” 215.

51 Ibid., 219. Uri Margolin writes: “A basic literary convention endows the claims of an impersonal omniscient narrative voice with truth by fiat, while all claims from other sources are fallible” (“Character,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 77). Similarly Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, 78; and James Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 131–132.

52 Nünning, “On the Perspective Structure,” 220.

liable) tends to override the character's, despite the fact that the latter maintains the center of interest and consciousness.⁵³

For example, when the Johannine narrator states that the religious leaders "loved human glory more than the glory that comes from God" (Jn. 12:43), readers do not simply accept this as a perspectival evaluation, but as the evaluative standard for the storyworld.⁵⁴ When authors use this strategy, the narrator is strongly intrusive and frequently comments on the events, actions, attitudes, and characters. Furthermore, this type of narrator generally mirrors the implied authorR at the level of values and beliefs.⁵⁵ Indeed, in a pure narrator-only strategy, the narrator is a proxy for the implied authorR. This results in a single evaluative standard that unambiguously governs the entire storyworld. An example of a pure narrator-only strategy is the Parable of the Sower (Mk. 4:3–8), where the farmer makes no comments on the plants, so that the evaluative tone on the destruction (*katesthiō*, *kaumatizō*, *sumpnigō*) is that of the narrator alone.

A second strategy is to use a character as a proxy for the narrator. Here authors employ a character whose evaluative comments always agree with the narrator's comments, providing this character with a rank nearly equal to the narrator. Authors employing this strategy still create an intrusive narrator who routinely gives direct evaluative comments, so that the narrator's worldview can be constructed, but now add a character who both follows and adds to those comments. As in the narrator-only strategy, this produces a clear and unambiguous standard that governs the entire storyworld. An example of this strategy occurs in the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Mt. 22:2–10), where the king's perspective harmonizes with the narrator's notion of social responsibility, as set in contrast to the dishonorable guests. The king responds to the situation with direct speech, agreeing with the narrator's evaluation about those who refuse to come to the feast. But the king also goes beyond the narrator, by extending his hospitality to everyone. As the king has closely followed the narrator's evaluative standard, readers assume that this extension is also part of the evaluative standard.

53 Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 156; author's parenthesis.

54 This evaluation is only for the simulation and bears no necessary relation to the actual world; see Chapter 7 on this relation.

55 This distinction is important when the two do not match up, as occurs with an unreliable narrator.

Some have suggested that this is the Markan strategy. So Fowler writes: "The narrator and Jesus share the same conceptual point of view ... and always the same voice. The distance between the narrator and Jesus is minimal or nil."⁵⁶ However, Elizabeth Malbon has convincingly shown that "the Markan narrator and the Markan Jesus do not speak with the same voice."⁵⁷ This Gospel uses a different strategy (below). Nevertheless, Fowler is correct to note that the closer a character is to the narrator's evaluative standard, the higher the reader ranks that character's comments.

The third strategy is for the narrator to use his or her privileged position to authorize an evaluative role for a character. In the prior strategy, the narrator and character stand together, but here the narrator's primary role is to certify a particular character to speak with authority, and this character produces the evaluative standard. This narrator uses direct commentary, privileged information, and narratorial asides to assign special status to this character. Henceforth, this character's conceptual point of view will function as the primary evaluative standard.

This is the strategy used in Mark. The narrator and Jesus may hold similar views, but have different functions: Mark uses the narrator to validate Jesus as the godly man *par excellence*, and then uses the godly man *par excellence* to produce the evaluative standard for the storyworld. So the narrator, beginning with the opening verse, validates Jesus' status through the application of titles (Mk. 1:1), Jesus' placement in salvation history (Mk. 1:2–3), the descent of the spirit (Mk. 1:10), the heavenly voice (Mk. 1:11), and the archetypal confrontation in the wilderness (Mk. 1:13). For the remainder of the text, the bulk of the evaluative comments come from Jesus. So it is Jesus who voices the authoritative position on fasting, healing and reaping on the Sabbath, and clean/unclean foods. The Markan narrator even uses indirect speech about Jesus to reveal this standard, as where the narrator states: "Thus he (Jesus) declared all foods clean" (Mk. 7:19).

In using these various strategies, the author not only reveals the evaluative standard, but where other characters fit into the perspective structure. This is especially important when the character bearing the standard is either absent or has not addressed the issue at hand. For example, in Mark 7:2, the scribes notice that the disciples are eating "with defiled (*koinos*) hands," but it is not until several verses later that Jesus addresses the issue. During this interval,

56 Fowler, *Let The Reader Understand*, 33, 78.

57 Elizabeth Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 233–234.

readers assume that the disciples have the correct view, as they are ranked higher in the perspective structure than the religious leaders.

This placement of characters is determined by three types of comments.⁵⁸ First, the narrator may use direct commentary or narratorial asides that assign specific positions to characters. For example, Gospel narrators often directly comment on the religious leaders: they “rejected Gods’ purpose for themselves” (Lk. 7:30) and “loved human glory more than the glory that comes from God” (Jn. 12:43). These evaluative comments, from a reliable and omniscient narrator, are accepted as authoritative, and cause readers to grade this character-perspective lower. Second, upon establishing Jesus as the evaluative standard, the narrator can put evaluative comments in his mouth that function in the same way. These are also common in the Gospels, as where Jesus characterizes the religious leaders as “blind guides ... full of greed and self-indulgence” (Mt. 23:16, 25), or where Jesus compliments the centurion for his faith (Mt. 8:10, Lk. 7:9). Similarly, the disciples are often the target of Jesus’ critique, culminating in the argument over the disciples’ lack of insight (Mk. 8:16–21) and Jesus’ comment to Peter (Mk. 8:24: “Get behind me, Satan”). The third way involves setting characters against the character who embodies the evaluative standard (Jesus), revealing contrasting attitudes and comments. So the Gospels routinely employ scenes where the religious leaders challenge Jesus’ authority (Mt. 21:23, Mk. 2:7) and standards (Mk. 2:16, 3:5), or where the crowd laughs at Jesus (Mk. 5:40).

To this point, we have addressed the strategies used in authorial narration with a third-person omniscient and reliable narrator. But New Testament narratives occasionally employ other narrative situations, such as the first-person narrative situation, with the most prominent example being the Revelation of John: “I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice” (Rev. 1:10). Here the narrator is outside of the event, looking back on his past, and recounting his memories. In such narratives, there is a distinction between the narrator who is recounting a remembered event (the narrating-I), and the character in the story who is—in the narrative—experiencing the event (the experiencing-I).⁵⁹ Because of this distinction, there are two overall perspectives: the older and wiser narrator who recalls the event, and the younger and

58 Esp. see Resseguie, who uses different terminology, but similar concepts (“Point of View,” 42–43).

59 Nünning’s terminology, from “On the Perspective Structure,” 218–220. For the first-person narrative situation: the privileged interest point of view is that of the experiencing-I (the interest bias); the privileged conceptual point of view is with the narrating-I (the evaluative standard); and the privileged perceptual point of view is the experiencing-I.

naïve character who is remembered as experiencing the event. Because the narrating-I can account for the consequences of those actions, his or her perspective is normally given privilege.

Consider the following example: “When I saw the dog, I thought that it would not bite, but I should have known better.” Here the narrating-I and experiencing-I have different views of the encounter with this dog. But the narrating-I knows the outcome of this encounter—that the dog will bite—and so critiques the experiencing-I: “I should have known better.” Privilege attaches to the older and wiser narrating-I. Similarly, the narrating-I of Revelation knows that “the scroll” will be opened (Rev. 5:4), but is recounting how the experiencing-I wept over the fear that it might not. Since the narrating-I has a broader view, tempered by knowing the results of those events, his or her conceptual point of view is usually the evaluative standard. But this does not mean that the narrating-I is always reliable, as he or she is still operating from the perspective of a single person, and is without access to the minds of other characters. As Nünning notes: “Despite the advantages of hindsight, the narrating I is never omniscient: his or her perspective tends to be highly partial.”⁶⁰

While this is the general scheme, a modification occurs in Revelation. Here the experiencing-I is made reliable by placing this character under the charge of a heavenly guide. Indeed, the point of apocalyptic literature is that the suffering community does not have the larger view, and so needs outside revelation: “The problem is not viewed simply in terms of the historical factors available to any observer. Rather is it viewed in the light of the transcendent reality disclosed by the apocalypse.”⁶¹ Hence, the experiencing-I receives the comprehensive view from an authoritative figure (Rev. 1:11–13), which he writes at the behest of that figure (Rev. 1:19), with examples from that figure’s conceptual point of view (e.g., Rev. 2–3). This suggests that the highest evaluative standard in Revelation lies with the heavenly guide.

Finally, it is important to note that the evaluative standard is often brought into conflict with the interest bias. Obvious examples occur where the disciples come into conflict with Jesus. In the Gospel of Mark, the disciples argue over “who is greatest” (Mk. 9:34) and vie to sit at his “right and left hand” (Mk. 10:35). In doing so, they reveal their interests in obtaining status and honor (interest bias). Henceforth, readers will grasp all events in relation to these interests, that is, as to how events further or impede their grasping for status and honor. But readers also recognize that the evaluative standard is located in Jesus (and

60 Ibid., 219.

61 John Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 40–41.

the narrator), and Jesus critiques these interests negatively (Mk. 10:42–45). This puts readers in the unique situation of having the interest and conceptual views of the disciples, but of evaluating both as deeply flawed. Given the participatory aspect of identification, the literary effect is that ‘our’ interests in the storyworld, as well as ‘our’ evaluations of others, are simply wrong. In principle, this is no different from identifying with Macbeth (Shakespeare), and finding that ‘our’ interest in power is a moral failing.

This puts readers in a second unique situation, where they recognize their errors in the storyworld, but are unable to change. The reading-self lacks an executive function to make different choices, and is unable to dissociate from the disciples because of commitment. The reading-self stays with the disciples in the hope that they will reform. In such a position, readers are permitted to experience how such errors play out in the narrative. After all, the original function of mental simulations was counterfactual testing, so as to find in the simulation—and not in real life—the futures created by such choices. In identifying with Macbeth, *readers learn in their experience* what striving after power does to people, and how such lives end. Some narratives allow readers to escape their errors and to rectify the situation, as happens with the disciples in Luke-Acts. In others, hope is offered through an implied change in the future (Mark). In yet others, all hope is removed, resulting in tragedy (Macbeth, Parable of the Vineyard).

4 Summary

In this chapter, we focused on the problems created by having multiple characters in a narrative. This creates entrance and interaction problems. The former is tied to the recognition that readers enter the storyworld and have uptake of its events through the character of identification. This creates a particular experience of the storyworld, which is different from experiencing the storyworld in any other character’s position. As this experience is central to determining meaning, authors craft their narratives so that readers identify with a particular character. They do this by employing a strategy that is designed to push, bias, urge, and impel readers toward that character. Once identification has occurred, the reading-self functions as that character in the storyworld, so that meaning is not developed by propositional argument, but by participatory experience.

The interaction problem is more complicated, for it involves engaging with other characters and with larger evaluative structures. Literary narratives virtually always include conflict. In order to engage issues of significance, authors

need to create conflict with depth, and this requires characters with depth—including minor characters. These characters often have a fully developed interest point of view and conceptual point of view, and even include emotional and cognitive responses. When such characters come into conflict, the conflict is not simply for gratuitous violence, but occurs over specific issues in each character's worldview. One might even consider these characters as ciphers for specific worldviews and interests, so that conflict occurs as embodied perspectives within a larger narrative argument.

The notion of a larger narrative argument suggests that these character-windows are not simply set out as contrasting views, but are arranged in a design. Central to this design are the interest bias and evaluative standard. Authors produce an interest bias by using a character of identification. Readers assign their way of being to this character, and so evaluate all actions in relation to this character's interests and goals. From this position, readers learn the outcome of those interests in their experience. Authors also produce an evaluative standard, by which readers judge the moral rightness of all actions, goals, attitudes, and beliefs. This is usually located in the narrator, but other strategies may place it in select storyworld characters. Authors often bring the interest bias and evaluative standard into conflict, revealing central aspects of the narrative's conflict.

Experiencing the Event

In the last two chapters, we focused on the reading-self as a character inside a narrative simulation. In this chapter, we turn to the simulation itself. A narrative is a series of events, connected temporally and causally (including alternate forms of temporality and causality), that are designed for readers to experience.¹ The reading-self enters the simulation and experiences the event as a participant. This suggests two central issues for this chapter. First, how do readers engage and evaluate the event itself? Are the events grasped as real events? Do imagined events create serious meaning? When walking on a narrative highway, is the concrete “just as real as that used to make the actual highways on which we drive.”²

Second, how do authors shape these events to say and do something? Authors design the series of events to reproduce their meanings in the reader's experience. But is this something a propositional statement, as if a lesson or a moral? Is a statement at the end of a parable (“So the first shall be last”) identical to experiencing the unfairness of a master and having one's hopes dashed (Mt. 20:1–16)? In what way is the experience of narrative related to descriptions about the narrative?

1 Mental Simulations and Serious Meaning

The capacity to create mental simulations is part of our biologic heritage. Humans use these simulations to test counterfactual possibilities and to understand human behavior. These simulations need to seem real, so that the results are taken seriously, though still be evaluated as not real, so that the results are

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- 1 Cf. Marie-Laure Ryan's discussion on narrative, which identifies the central issues (“Toward a Definition of Narrative,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 22–38). Our addition of “alternate forms” accounts for modernist and post-modernist narratives, including elements such as stream of consciousness narration, surrealist connections (which are still a kind of connection), and complications with temporality.
 - 2 From Robert Stalnaker's summary of Lewis' modal realism (“David Lewis [1941–2001],” in *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy*, ed. A.P. Martinich and David Sosa [Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001], 481).

not blindly followed. But does this characteristic of 'seeming real' mean that narratives create serious meaning? Does narrative meaning, whether of history or fantasy, have the capacity to affect readers' lives?

This issue is often cast as a fiction/nonfiction debate, with the suggestion that fictional narratives are for entertainment and nonfiction for serious meaning. Others cast this as a sacred literature/secular literature debate, where sacred literature creates a different kind of meaning that is more serious than secular novels. Literary scholars even divide texts into literary language/ordinary language, where only the latter is designed to convey information.³ But in the end, all such evaluations represent a failure to understand how this genre functions.

We begin by asking how narratives of fiction/nonfiction, secular/sacred, and literary/ordinary are different? At the lowest level, all use nouns and verbs in standard ways. Verbs do not have different functions in sentences of fiction and nonfiction. Similarly, figures of speech, such as metaphors and similes, do not have unique operations in sacred literature that are unavailable in secular literature. Ordinary language and literary language alike use plots and characters. At the level of compositing elements, the distinctions between these categories generally fail. As Kendall Walton concludes: "Whether a literary work is fiction or nonfiction does not necessarily show in its words. The very same sequence of words, the same sentences, might constitute either a biography or a novel."⁴ Similarly Noël Carroll concludes: "Our own position has been that these considerations do not require us in general to treat literature differently from ordinary discourse, except perhaps in certain limited instances."⁵

When we turn to more abstract categories and functions, authors have suggested three central types of distinctions. First, Monroe Beardsley has suggested that speech acts in fiction, have a "selective similarity" to normal speech acts, but are "pretend" and "defective."⁶ The acts are not seriously performed, and so the meaning cannot be taken seriously. However, speech acts in fiction are not formally or functionally different from those in nonfiction. John Searle analyzes speech acts in both, and concludes: "Utterance acts in fiction are indistinguishable from the utterance acts of serious discourse ... there is no textual

3 For an example, see Monroe Beardsley, "The Authority of the Text," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 33.

4 Kendall Walton, "Fiction and Nonfiction," in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 139.

5 Noël Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation," in *Intention & Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 113.

6 Monroe Beardsley, "Intentions and Interpretations: A Fallacy Revived," in *The Aesthetic Point of View*, ed. Michael Wreen and Donald Callen (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 191.

property that will identify a stretch of discourse as a work of fiction.”⁷ Indeed, when a fictional character orders another to run and this order is followed, we may say that the speech act has illocutionary force and uptake in the story-world. In other words, speech acts function normally in the storyworld.

Furthermore, even if fictional speech acts were defective, it would not impact on the issue of serious meaning. Fictional novels still have effects upon readers, as Marxist and Feminist critics are quick to point out. Myths and fables embody the root metaphors for a culture, despite the fact that some would label their speech acts as defective. Lennard Davis, in reflecting on his own reading experiences, puts it best:

My very sense of myself comes out of the pages of novels as much as it comes out of the working-class apartment in the Bronx where I attained consciousness ... My notions of beauty, truth, and reality peel off the pages of these works. I am the perfect prisoner of the novel.⁸

A second type of distinction is that fiction is about play and aesthetic pleasure, so that it is never about serious meaning in the first place. The argument, beginning with Plato, is that art “is a form of play, not to be taken seriously.”⁹ As Armand D’Angour notes: “Play remained suspect for Plato, because it was fundamentally irrational. Its rules and rituals, its objects and conventions appeared to have little purpose other than to distract and amuse children.”¹⁰ In its modern form, readers assume that literary narratives deliver aesthetic pleasure or entertainment, but not information.¹¹

But this does not account for all the effects of the reader’s engagement with a narrative. Imagine that one’s young daughter comes home with a series of romance novels, where the woman is always subservient to the man. She may

7 John Searle, “The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse,” in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 115.

8 Lennard Davis, *Resisting Novels* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 1–2. Similarly, Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 227, 151–153.

9 Plato, *Republic: Book X*, in *Philosophy of Literature*, trans. Francis Cornford, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 11. Plato views art as imitation, and so at remove from reality. Note that Plato considers the performance of poetry as having serious effects (*Republic*, 11.377), and so bans it from the Republic. For the larger discussion, cf. G.R.F. Ferrari, “Plato and Poetry,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Classical Criticism*, vol. 1, ed. George Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1989), 108–116.

10 Armand D’Angour, “Plato and Play: Taking Education Seriously in Ancient Greece,” *American Journal of Play* 5, no. 3 (Spring 2013): 306–307, accessed Aug. 4, 2017, EBSCOhost.

11 Cf. the school of New Criticism, as discussed in Chapter 1.

engage these with a desire for entertainment, but is pleasure the only effect? Even more to the point, consider Martha Nussbaum's example of Nazi fiction, where Jews were portrayed as "either totally nonhuman (insects or vermin, in many children's books), or else as evil and threatening, parasites who prey on the social fabric of Germany."¹²

These effects of reading may be explained by the processes of reproduction and engagement. Readers reproduce their desires, cultural world, and assumptions from the elements of the text. If readers desire entertainment or vicarious pleasure, then they select a reading method designed to deliver these, and tacitly assume that the text is about the same. But reading is also an engagement with something, and the readers' desire and method never completely obliterate that design—otherwise readers could never engage otherness. Paul Ricoeur notes that even when a text is detached from its original situation and audience, "this detachment is not such as to cancel the fundamental structure of discourse."¹³ In our example, the young reader may approach the romance novel as entertainment, but the author shaped the events to present and validate an androcentric worldview. This basic design still bleeds though, in the form of experienced meaning, so that readers create something that needs to be resisted. Indeed, Marxist, Feminist, Womanist, African-American, and Post-colonial criticisms are rooted in this recognition. In the end, reading risks reshaping the self, so that readers must always evaluate the effects of that experience, even if the experience is of fiction.

A third type of distinction is that fiction is grounded in a defective notion of reference. As Klaus Hempfer summarizes: "This line of scholarship investigates how we can possibly retain the notion of a referential semantics ... in the face of terms and phrases that have no corresponding entities in extralinguistic reality."¹⁴ Because fiction does not make reference to real objects, it is a form of pretend, and the emotions attached to it are fake and contrived. So Kendall Walton states: "Our fear of the Frankenstein monster is peculiarly unfounded if we are destined to survive no matter what."¹⁵ Since the word 'Frankenstein'

12 Martha Nussbaum, "Exactly and Responsibly: A Defense of Ethical Criticism," *Philosophy and Literature* 22.2 (1998): 354, author's parenthesis.

13 Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory* (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 25. See Gregory Laughery's discussion of Ricoeur (*Living Hermeneutics in Motion* [Lanham: University Press of America, 2002], 36–43).

14 Klaus Hempfer, "Some Problems Concerning a Theory of Fiction(ality)," *Style* 38, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 306.

15 Kendall Walton, "Fearing Fictionally," in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 177. For Walton, fear is only genuine if there is belief in the threat (*Ibid.*, 178).

has no physical referent, narratives about Frankenstein cannot actually hurt the reader or produce serious meaning.¹⁶

While this argument seems reasonable, it runs into several problems. To begin, there is no such a thing pure fiction, for that would be a form of radical otherness with no common ground for understanding or communication. As Kai Mikkonen notes: "Pure fiction thus involves a hypothetical fictional world *that would have to explain everything that it constructs*, perhaps also teach the language that it uses."¹⁷ Fiction involves as much mimesis of the actual world as construction of a non-actual world. As Bohumil Fort writes: "Fictional worlds ... always somehow reflect the actual world, at least to the extent that both (author and reader) entering a fictional world are deeply anchored in the actual world."¹⁸ Thus, fiction never creates a fully autonomous world, but exists as an extension of the actual world.

Next, the notion of fiction as defective reference is rife with paradoxes. For example, objects that are imaginary in one setting may well be actual in another: "Certain forms of, say, science fiction and utopia, can become real in the actual world."¹⁹ Conversely, some fictional texts contain actual facts and events, as in historical fiction. Furthermore, linguistic reference itself is problematic, as the connection between 'word' and 'thing' is never direct: a sound (signifier) is metaphorically attached to a mental concept (signified), which itself is metaphorically attached to a physical object. Hence, the signifier never contains the essence of the object itself. One might accurately state that reference is always partially defective, and so not a defining criterion in the serious/non-serious debate. Our conclusion is that of Richard Walsh: "I am claiming that fictionality is not contingent upon ontological-referential criteria, and cannot be adequately accounted for by reference failure or reference to fictional worlds."²⁰

16 Walton writes: "The core ... is the idea that fiction is parasitic on 'serious discourse' ... and fictional uses are based on or derived from them in one way or another" ("Fiction and Nonfiction," 141).

17 Kai Mikkonen, "There is No Such Thing as Pure Fiction': Impossible Worlds and the Principle of Minimal Departure Reconsidered," *Journal of Literary Studies* 40 (2011):113, accessed Feb. 8, 2016, doi: 10.1515/jlse.2011.007, italics added.

18 Bohumil Fort, "Are Fictional Worlds Really Possible? A Short Contribution to Their Semantics," *Style* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 195, my parenthesis.

19 Kai Mikkonen, "Can Fiction Become Fact? The Fiction-to-Fact Transition in Recent Theories of Fiction," *Style* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 294.

20 Richard Walsh, "Fictionality and Mimesis: Between Narrativity and Fictional Worlds," *Narrative* 11, no. 1 (Jan 2003): 115.

Finally, on the issue of the emotions, there is no such thing as a fake or contrived emotion. The basic emotions are mental programs that are activated by triggers or cues in the environment (Chapter 3), whether those cues are real or imagined. If a shadow passes over a rodent, it will run in fear regardless of whether that shadow is from a hawk or a paper airplane. Emotional cues can be contrived, but not the emotion itself. While the actual-self is in no physical danger from the Frankenstein monster, the reading-self still experiences genuine fear as an input from the fear-program. As Walton notes: "(The viewer's) heart pounds violently; he gasps for breath ... This is not the behavior of a man who basically realizes that he is safe."²¹ For the reading-self in the storyworld, the characters, emotions, and events are neither fake nor pretend. The reading-self feels unicorn hair, hears unicorn noises, and sees unicorn tails.

In the end, it appears that the arguments marshalled against serious meaning cannot be sustained for the reading-self. The reading-self experiences the events as a mental simulation, where not only do events seem real, but the distinctions between fiction/nonfiction and sacred/secular do not apply. Such evaluations are made *by the actual-self from outside of the simulation*, and even here the actual-self may mistake fiction for nonfiction. There is no shortage of fictional texts that were acted upon, as where people fled from their homes during the radio broadcast of Orwell's *War of the Worlds*. Indeed, propagandists and advertisers depend upon this error.

Having removed the arguments against serious meaning, we now turn to the mechanisms by which narratives do this, of which there are four. The first mechanism has already been examined, namely, narratives function as mental simulations. This capacity was developed for the testing of counterfactuals, where the simulations needed to seem real so that the results would be taken seriously. This process was then adapted to the telling of fictional stories, but retained the operational quality of seeming real. Samuel Coleridge notes the experience of readers temporarily accepting the existence of fictional objects, calling this the "willing suspension of disbelief."²² However, readers do not choose to suspend disbelief, as this operation occurs automatically. The reading-self experiences the simulation with an intuition of actuality.

The second mechanism is that this intuition of actuality is reinforced by a mimetic anchoring in the real world. Narratives function as events, and while the events may be imaginary, the structure of the event is rooted in the readers' actual world. Speer's group performed scans (fMRI) on readers and concluded

21 Walton, "Fearing Fictionally," 178, parenthesis added.

22 Samuel Coleridge, "Biographia Literaria," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 677.

that narrative processing “may reflect the existence of a general network for understanding event structure.”²³ For example, authors give events a temporal framework. Readers recognize this framework as part of the actual world, even when it occurs in fiction. As Lawrence Lombard notes: “Since no thing can have a property and any of its contraries at the same time, no event occurs instantaneously; each event has some *interval* for its time of occurrence.”²⁴ When these frameworks are altered, as occurs in science fiction, readers do not recognize the alteration as something radically new, but as an extension of the normal framework. Similarly, events have a causal structure that is recognized by readers, along with notions of agency and natural laws. Our conclusion is that of Adam Newton:

I am aware of the dangers in collapsing the difference between the world of the text and the world which this final example of life-turned-into-story raises, but I think it is fairly well established that narrative literature shares structures and assumptions with other forms of social understanding. The strong mimeticist position argues that narrative fiction is continuous with common structures of everyday experience.²⁵

The third mechanism involves the filling of gaps in a narrative. Readers fill such gaps from their cultural treasury, supplying real world objects to the simulation. When readers encounter the sentence: “Michael sat down at the table,” they supply a chair from their own world. Unless specified by the narrative, readers do not supply something imaginary, such as a rocket-chair. As David Lewis notes: “It is wrong, or at least eccentric, to read the Holmes stories as if they might ... be taking place at a world where three-nostrilled detectives pursue purple gnomes.”²⁶ From this, Lewis posed his “principle of minimal departure,”

23 Nicole Speer, Jeffery Zacks, and Jeremy Reynolds, “Human Brain Activity Time-locked to Narrative Event Boundaries,” *Psychological Science* 18, no. 5 (2007): 454, accessed Feb. 26, 2017, JSTOR Journals, EBSCOhost.

24 Lawrence Lombard, “Sooner or Later,” *Nous* 29, no. 3 (September 1995), 343, author’s italics. Lombard concludes that “temporal features ... should be essential,” though he adds that proving this remains problematic.

25 Adam Newton, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 24. Also cf. Hayden White, who suggests that historians employ “the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play” (“The Historical Text as Literary Artifact,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch [New York: W.W. Norton, 2001], 1715–1716).

26 David Lewis, “Truth in Fiction,” in *Philosophy of Literature: Contemporary and Classic Readings*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 124.

where readers “depart from actuality as far as we must to reach a possible world where the counterfactual supposition comes true.”²⁷ The point is that readers base the narrative simulation upon their general understanding of world, and fill gaps with objects from their actual world. This presence, of real-world objects reinforces one’s intuition of actuality for the storyworld.

Finally, upon entering the storyworld, readers find at least one actual object in the simulation: themselves.²⁸ Characters are constructed on the basic model of ‘humans,’ suggesting that characters begin as a reproduction of one’s own ontological structure. When the text presents cues that trigger emotions or bodily actions, readers utilize their own embodied knowledge to understand them. As Marco Caracciolo notes, readers run “embodied simulations of the actions described, and these simulations are hardwired in the reader’s own body—only in a second moment do we attribute these experiences to a fictional character.”²⁹ Because of this, readers “feel physically present in the imaginary world.”³⁰ This is intensified in the character of identification, for here the reading-self takes on concrete form in the simulation, and the simulation provides this form with emotions, thoughts, senses, and time.

For the reading-self, these various mechanisms foster an intuition of actuality for the storyworld. Indeed, one might even say that readers grant an ontological status to the simulation, *evaluating it as a temporary actual world*.³¹ This would explain the powerful reactions that readers have to emotional events that are clearly fictional, and the resulting serious meaning.

27 Ibid. See discussion in Mikkonen, “There is No Such Thing as Pure Fiction,” 114–116.

28 Anežka Kuzmičová calls this “direct presence,” where, via embodied knowledge and daxis, readers “are physically present and engaged in the imaginary world of the story” (“The Words and Worlds of Literary Narrative,” in *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*, ed. Lars Bernaerts, Dirk De Geest, and Luc Herman [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013], Kindle edition, Kindle location 2105). See our discussion in Chapter 4, in the section An Introduction to Identification.

29 Marco Caracciolo, “Blind Reading: Toward and Enactivist Theory of the Reader’s Imagination,” in *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*, ed. Lars Bernaerts, Dirk de Geest, and Luc Herman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), Kindle edition, Kindle locations 1745–1747.

30 Kuzmičová, “The Words and Worlds of Literary Narrative,” Kindle locations 2116–2117. Kuzmičová thinks that the experience of motor resonance is uncommon in ancient literature, due to the paucity of ‘touch’ words. But this is only a relative notion; by my count, the gospels use ‘touch’ words 45 times; esp. cf. Mark 8:23.

31 As developed in the next section, the reading-self grants the simulation the status of a temporary actual world (modal realism), while the actual-self grants it the status of a temporary possible world (moderate realism). This distinction is essential to prevent the reader’s passive assimilation of meaning, as occurs in propaganda.

2 The Reading-Self and Modal Realism

How does a temporary actual world function? What is the relation of the actual-self and the reading-self to this world, and in what way is it an actual world? This brings us to the models posed by possible worlds theory. These models relate the existence of 'other worlds' to one's real world, and are especially important when applying an intuition to actuality to a storyworld. Using this field's conceptual language, we can pose how the actual-self and the reading-self grasp the experiences of a mental simulation.

To begin, possible worlds theory does not directly apply to narrative worlds. This field was developed to test the imaginable extensions of a reference world. For example, Lombard engages in possible worlds theory to explore "whether the temporal features of events, however hard they may be to fix, are essential to them."³² Nevertheless, this area does provide a framework for understanding narrative space. As Ruth Ronen summarizes: "Possible worlds supply, for the first time, a philosophical framework for explaining fiction ... This is a radical shift in the long tradition ... that viewed fiction as a sequence of propositions devoid of truth value."³³

Ronen presents three possible worlds stances that apply to narrative events. The first is "modal realism," where the reader grasps the narrative world as an actual world, just as real as any other world. Here the notions of 'world' and 'real' are understood as indexed to the reader—much like 'here' and 'now' are tied to the person who uses them. Each narrative world is real to the reader who constructs them: "The inhabitants of each world see their universe as the actual one."³⁴ As Robert Stalnaker summarizes: "The actual world is just a part of reality—the part that is temporally and spatially related to us."³⁵ For readers of fantasy, the unicorn has real hair, a real odor, and a real tail.

This model does explain some of the readers' experiences. Readers routinely have the intuition that the narrative world exists like a real world: their pulse rises at the presence of the Frankenstein monster. However, they do not run out of the theater in fear or call the police. They recognize a distinction between the two worlds, and this suggests that modal realism is not the whole story.

32 Lombard, "Sooner or Later," 343. Ruth Ronen writes: "The possible construction of a fictional world has therefore nothing to do with abstract logical possibilities of occurrence" (*Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* [Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1994], 51).

33 Ibid., 20.

34 Ibid., 22.

35 Robert Stalnaker, "Modalities and Possible Worlds," in *A Companion to Metaphysics*, ed. Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1995), 334.

The second stance is “moderate realism,” which contains a range of views, but all begin with the assumption of a recognizable difference between the actual world and the possible world. Here one begins with an actual world, but extends it in ways that could have occurred or might have occurred. A basketball team may have lost a game on Friday night, but one could imagine players acting differently, resulting in a possible world where they won. The possible world is based on the real world, but extended into non-actualized possibilities. Indeed, one can even extend it in ways that could never have occurred: a unicorn is an extension of an actual horse, and so has a horse’s hair and smell, but is extended in non-actual ways to include magical properties.³⁶ In short, a narrative simulation with a unicorn may be based on the actual world, but is still not part of one’s real world, and so no has force for one’s existence.

This model also explains some of the readers’ experiences. Readers recognize that a simulation is a counterfactual extension of the actual world, as where the basketball team wins. However, the simulated experience may be so overwhelming that readers cheer at fictionally winning the basketball game, or cry at the death of the unicorn. Much like Aesop’s story of *The Fox and the Grapes*, the fox acts upon its extension of the grapes into “sour grapes.” These emotions and actions seem out of place in the moderate realism model, where readers know that the simulation is not the real world. This suggests that moderate realism is also not the whole story.

The third stance is the “anti-realist view,” where the notion of a possible world is as problematic as the notion of a real world. There is no actual way things are, so that the distinction between fiction and nonfiction is tossed in favor of a radical relativism or a thoroughgoing social construction of reality.³⁷ Here the unicorn has no more actual existence than my world has actual existence. All are simply cultural constructs. This model also explains some of the readers’ experiences. Readers routinely note that mental simulations seem real, despite that fact that these can be quite diverse and even mutually exclusive. However, readers also recognize that some simulations, such as those in the genre of fantasy, represent violations of natural laws, and so tacitly admit that some worlds are less real than others. No one looks for magical horses. This speaks against anti-realism.

36 Ronen writes: “They differentiate between the modality of the actual world, and the modality of hypothetical possible constructs which form the non-actualized part of the world” (*Possible Worlds*, 23).

37 Ronen writes: “Yet if the actual is a contingency, a myth that manifests no essential difference from non-actual states of the world, possible worlds claims the anti-realist, will also prove to constitute a relative notion, of no avail when the distinction between the actual and the non-actual is at stake” (*Possible Worlds*, 23).

The problem, here, is explaining the genuine diversity of experiences in reading. Mikkonen correctly recognizes these as separate types of experiences that cannot be resolved in a single world: “As readers or viewers of fiction, however, we are supposed to simultaneously inhabit two different worlds with different ontological statuses.”³⁸ Our model takes account of these issues by positing two different types of readers (actual-self, reading-self) who exist in two different types of worlds (the actual world, the simulation). The reading-self inhabits the world of the simulation, where the simulation’s objects and events are experienced as real. But the actual-self inhabits the real world, and from this perspective, the simulation’s objects and events are grasped as ‘not real.’ This suggests that each self *uses a different possible worlds stance*.

Let us begin with the reading-self. The reading-self is an extension of the actual-self that is shaped by the text. It is overwritten with the settings, actions, and worldview posited by the narrative, almost as if its existence were indexed to that world. The notion that the reading-self is indexed to the simulation suggests that the reading-self enters the simulation under the stance of modal realism: the narrative’s events are the reading-self’s only reality. The unicorn has a real horn, and should it charge, the reading-self will experience real fear over real danger. When reading the Gospel story of the epileptic boy, the actual-self may not believe that epilepsy is caused by spirits, but the reading-self is absolutely convinced that a demon is trying to kill the child. So Ronen suggests that “facts of the actual world have no *a priori* ontological privilege over facts of the fictional world.”³⁹

But even this is not radical enough. The reading-self not only accepts the events and objects of the fictional world as reality, but privileges these facts over any other world’s facts, events, characters, causes, or beliefs.⁴⁰ The reading-self even experiences a narrative history as occurring in his or her ‘now’ and ‘here,’ as if the events were indexed to his or her present time and location: it is experienced as a temporary actual world. This model accounts for the serious nature of the storyworld for the reading-self, and why serious meaning does not require verisimilitude.⁴¹ For the reading-self, experiences of fiction—such as the parables—are just as serious as experiences of nonfictional biography. In short, the *ontological status of the simulation’s events* depends on the

38 Mikkonen, “Can Fiction Become Fact,” 307.

39 Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 12.

40 The only place this may not be the case is in metafiction, where the text problematizes the fictional world for the reading-self.

41 Studies in parables have often emphasized verisimilitude, but this misses how mental simulations operate.

reading-self's relation to the storyworld (modal realism), and not the narrative's relationship to any reference world.⁴²

On the other hand, the actual-self inhabits the actual world. As the narrative simulation is built upon this world, we may call the actual world the reference world. The actual-self recognizes that the simulation is an extension of the reference world. It is not an autonomous world with no connection to the reference world, for then every aspect of the simulation would have to be constructed, including its physics, language, and mathematics. Since it is an extension, the actual-self evaluates the storyworld as a non-actual temporary world: its events are not presently occurring in the reference world, and so have no necessary force for one's existence. This is the stance of moderate realism, where the actual-self recognizes a distinction between the simulation and the reference world. While this stance is easily recognized when reading fiction, it also applies to reading nonfiction and autobiography. Here the distinction is spatiotemporal: the actual-self does not act as if the simulation were unfolding during the time of reading, but as if it were from a prior time and place. From a position outside of the simulation, the actual-self uses cues to characterize the simulation as here/elsewhere, now/earlier, fiction/nonfiction and sacred/secular.⁴³

But this model still needs to account for the linguistic markers of fiction, as in Dorrit Cohn's "signposts of fictionality."⁴⁴ These are literary aspects of texts that readers recognize as revealing its fictional status, suggesting that the reading-self might be engaged in making the fiction/nonfiction evaluation—a conclusion we earlier rejected. For example, one of Cohn's cues is when a text presents a character's private thoughts or intentions. As humans do not know the contents of another's mind, Cohn suggests that mindreading is a mark of fiction.⁴⁵ However, when the reading-self encounters an inside view, he or she does not immediately jump to the conclusion that the text is fiction. Even when

42 White writes on narrative history: "It does not matter whether the world is conceived to be real or only imagined; the manner of making sense of it is the same" ("The Historical Text," 1728); Cf. Walsh, "Fictionality and Mimesis," 115.

43 In the segregationist/integrationist debate, this is the moderate segregationist position. The issues of here/elsewhere and now/earlier are especially visible when the text acts as if it were in conversation with the present reader. An example is where the Markan author writes: "Let the reader understand" (Mk. 13:14).

44 Dorrit Cohn, "Signposts of Fictionality: A Narratological Perspective," *Poetics Today* 11, no. 4 (Wint. 1990): 775–804, accessed May 9, 2016, doi:10.2307/1773077.

45 However, Cohn notes that historians occasionally engage in this kind of mindreading, as when attributing intentions to historical characters (Ibid., 785–787), so that her criteria are not absolute.

a character has the capacity to read another's thoughts (e.g., Mt. 12:25, Mk. 2:8, Lk. 11:17), the reading-self does not jump to this conclusion.

For the reading-self, an inside view is simply a fact of the storyworld, especially when narrated by an omniscient and reliable narrator. Questions about the validity of mindreading come from outside of the simulation. Here the actual-self recognizes a mindreading event, compares this to the reference world, and evaluates the validity of the claim. In short, the reading-self uses the stance of modal realism to accept the storyworld as reality, while the actual-self uses the stance of moderate realism to evaluate this as a non-actual extension of the reference world.

This discussion suggests that the reading-self does not distinguish between fiction and nonfiction: the reading-self grants the simulation the ontological status of a temporary actual world. But the actual-self recognizes that the simulation is an imaginative extension, so that it is only a temporary possible world. Hence, for the actual-self, the simulation *may or may not provide valid meaning for the actual world*. Issues of validity-for-self are determined by the actual-self's evaluations, beginning with the determinations of fiction/nonfiction and sacred/secular, as defined by that reader's criteria for each. Should the actual-self apply the category of sacred text to the New Testament, then he or she is also assigning it a particular value and validity that is not assigned to, say, *A Christmas Carol* (Charles Dickens).

3 The Actual-Self and Moderate Realism

The discussion of possible world stances is important for two central reasons. First, these stances reveal how narratives function. For the reading-self, these are mental simulations that do not just seem real, but are reality. Let us pause to pull these threads together. The reading-self has powerful and shaping experiences in the storyworld, because he or she (1) grasps mental simulations from the stance of modal realism; (2) experiences the emotional and cognitive effects of identification, along with his or her own presence in the storyworld; (3) engages these events with embodied knowledge, where the reading-self has inputs from his or her own emotion programs, motor resonance, and senses; (4) initially maps his or her own learning and memories onto narrative events (situational empathy, filling the gaps), along with his or her own symbolic universe and social institutions (original configuration); and (5) uses mimesis of his or her own grasp of event (time, space, causation, etc.) to understand the narrative's structure. For the reading-self, these create an intuition of actuality for the storyworld.

This brings us to the second reason, namely, that it provides a framework for understanding how narratives impact upon the actual-self. The actual-self and reading-self may occupy separate worlds with different ontological conditions, but they still interact. Indeed, readers often have the experience of arguing with themselves over the meanings of a text, which is usually the actual-self arguing with the reading-self over some issue. When reading *The Awakening* (Kate Chopin), the reading-self may experience suicide as an appropriate solution in the storyworld, but the actual-self may question the validity of this path and consider alternatives. Similarly, the reading-self of the Parable of the Good Samaritan may come to the meaning that religious people are not doing the work of God, but the actual-self may argue over the validity of this conclusion.

Understanding this interaction is critical, as narrative experience has the capacity to reshape the actual-self. The concern is that narrative meanings, and especially those associated with intense emotional experiences, might be assimilated by the actual-self in an uncritical fashion. Paul Ricoeur writes that the fragility of the self “lies in the confrontation with others, felt to be a threat. It is a fact that the other, because other, comes to be perceived as a danger for one’s own identity.”⁴⁶ This concern goes as far back as Plato, on which Ferrari summarizes:

A poetic performance (the image) engages its participants not simply in the look but, as we say, in the whole ‘feel’ of the human action it portrays; and since emotions and ethical attitudes are a crucial part of that action, by allowing ourselves to identify with what is depicted (by participating, that is, in the performance) we come in some sense to reproduce those emotions and attitudes, that ‘feel,’ within ourselves.⁴⁷

Now, it is clear that the actual-self does not simply accept every meaning that the reading-self constructs. Otherwise, after reading the Harry Potter novels, readers would believe in magic. The actual-self is not the “perfect prisoner of the novel,” any more than he or she is the prisoner of commercials and propaganda. As Gibson notes: “Recognition of a violent disparity between ourself as mock reader and ourself as actual person acting in a real world is the process by which we keep our money in our pockets.”⁴⁸ In our model, the actual-self

46 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 81.

47 Ferrari, “Plato and Poetry,” 109; author’s parentheses.

48 Walker Gibson, “Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers,” in *Reader-Response Criti-*

approaches mental simulations with the stance of moderate realism, and so evaluates these as imaginative extensions of the reference world. The actual-self may be biased to accept the seriousness of these experiences, but this is very different from evaluating the events as reality.

Going behind the general labels of fiction/nonfiction and secular/sacred, how is the actual-self to evaluate the validity of the simulation's meanings? After all, the actual-self inhabits a world with different ontological conditions and has not experienced the simulation. To make such determinations, the actual-self must begin with a clear understanding of how the reading-self developed these meanings. Fortunately, the actual-self knows exactly where the reading-self began its narrative journey, since the reading-self began as a projection of the actual-self. The actual-self can track how the reading-self was changed, as the reading experiences are part of memory. This allows the actual-self to render an account of the reading-self's journey through these shaping and overwriting experiences. Indeed, readers often explicitly engage this process when trying to figure out a confusing text. In this way, the actual-self is able to grasp the otherness of the 'final' reading-self. Thus, the reading-self represents a pathway to grasping otherness.

After understanding how these meanings were developed, the actual-self turns to evaluating them. The evaluative process begins with the application of broad labels, such as fiction/nonfiction and sacred/secular, but is extended by the actual-self's comparison of storyworld meanings to his or her own grasp of reality. If the actual-self's evaluations are excessively negative, the reader may dismiss the experiences of the text as contrived and artificial. But the point is that the actual-self, with its stance of moderate realism, *determines the relation of the reading-self's experiences to the reference world*. Hence, we must spend some time understanding how events are constructed, before turning to evaluation (Chapter 7).

4 The Experience of Event: Letters to Words

In the last section, we addressed the models used to understand and evaluate events. In this section, we turn to the readers' construction of events. Reading begins with marks on the page, which are temporally accessed. For example, readers might recognize the first mark as 'c,' and contextualize this as an English

cism: *From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. J. Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 2.

letter, with the expectation of further English letters, though without knowing if this is part of a noun or verb. If the next letter is 'a' and the final letter 't,' then readers recognize the set of marks as an English noun, that in some mysterious way conjures up the image of a furry mammal. But how do readers get from the physical marks to that furry animal?

Language is tied to the capacity to think metaphorically, that is, to link a collection of physical marks on a page (sign) to a mental image (sense). When these metaphors become regularized within a culture, they may be called a convention. Since these conventions have no intrinsic connection to their objects, but are arbitrary in nature (Saussure), following them is a matter of choice. For the sake of coordination and communication, people follow these conventions as if under an implicit social contract.

Now, while 'cat' may be metaphorically attached to a furry mammal, this does not explain how a collection of marks results in the emergence of linguistic meaning. After all, there is no property of linguistic meaning in the letter 'c.' Here we turn to the notion of emergentism, where a collection of objects results in "genuinely novel properties not possessed by its simpler constituents."⁴⁹ The collection is the letters 'c' 'a' and 't,' and the novel property is 'linguistic meaning.' Linguistic meaning only arises when these constituting elements are placed together.

We begin this discussion with the two central characteristics of emergentism.⁵⁰ The first characteristic is non-reducibility: emergent properties are not reducible to their compositing elements. Linguistic meaning is not reducible to the individual letters, as if letters carried bits of linguistic meaning or linguistic structure within them. Letters are simply conventional shapes that a first-grade student learns as part of the English alphabet. This is the basis for stating that an emergent property arises from the collection, as opposed to being emphasized or foregrounded from within the collection.

49 Jaegwon Kim, "Emergence: Core Ideas and Issues," *Synthese* 151, no. 3 (Aug. 2006): 548, accessed Mar. 16, 2017, doi: 0.1007/s11229-006-9025. While emergentism was not developed for linguistic systems, it provides a vocabulary for characterizing properties that emerge at higher levels of linguistic organization, that is, from letters to words, from words to sentences, and from sentences to paragraphs. Our application would be of the type Kim calls "radical kind emergence" (Ibid., 549), because of the arbitrary nature of the connections. Mechanisms are supplied from outside the elements via cultural conventions, i.e., as non-logical explanations for properties (See Kim's discussion on the distinctions between emergentism, explanations, and predictions; *ibid.*, 550–551).

50 Kim lists non-reducibility and supervenience (upward causation based on dependence) as the "two necessary conditions of emergence" (Ibid., 555).

The second characteristic is dependence. Emergent linguistic properties do not arise from just any collection of objects, but from a specific collection as determined by the conventions of that culture. These conventions specify the types of compositing elements (letters, sounds, clicks, or gestures), as well as the ordering of such elements ('c' is first, 'a' is second, 't' is third, reading from left to right). Within each culture, the types and order of elements are specified, so that the same collection of elements results in the same emergent properties. In short, dependence implies that properties arise with routineness. From this we may posit our initial, though provisional, conclusion: *a patterned collection of letters results in the emergence of a common usage*. By way of implication, any shift in the compositing elements necessarily shifts the emergent properties: changing the 'c' to 'p' still results in linguistic meaning, but with different specifics. This is of critical importance when engaging the larger chain of emergent properties, extending from letters to events. Shifts at the lower levels propagate through higher levels, changing the emergent properties at each level.

Two central caveats to our conclusion need to be introduced. First, humans can shift the conventions that connect letters to words, and words to linguistic meaning. There is a general reluctance to do so, at the risk of disrupting communication. Nevertheless, language does drift, with certain shifts becoming regularized into new conventions. This is the basis for our readers using the language conventions of the intended audience, as usage may have shifted for later audiences, even if they are from the same geographic area.⁵¹ Thus, we might better conclude that a patterned collection of letters results in the emergence of a common usage *for any particular cultural moment*.

The second caveat is that a patterned collection of letters may have more than one emergent property.⁵² The collection of 'c-a-t' may produce the property of linguistic meaning, but the particular meanings are variable: a furry mammal, the abbreviation for a medical scan (Computerized Axial Tomography), a type of fish (slang for catfish), or even the verbal use of 'to raise an anchor' (archaic). At the level of 'word,' there is no means for reducing this

51 This is the critique of those who assume that a cultural convention in modern Palestine may be used to understand the New Testament. Language is indexed to culture, so that each time the culture changes (symbolic universe, cognitive maps, social institutions), so do the language conventions and emergent objects. Similarly for the 21st century person reading Shakespeare or the original Kings James text. Having the same alphabet and words counts for very little.

52 Here our use of emergentism breaks down, as this does not quite fit the notion of property covariance.

variability, so that an isolated word cannot be reduced to any particular usage. Thus, we may finally conclude that a patterned collection of letters results in the emergence of *a limited set of usages* within the confines of a particular cultural moment.

The central point, for our discussion, is that this usage set is common to all members within that cultural moment, so that all members produce the same general meaning. As we concluded in an earlier section, meaning is not accessed through the author's private experiences or private language, but through the public language of the intended audience. This is the stance of conventionalism, where authors are competent in their understanding of language, and are using language in a hyper-normal way. However, authors are subjects, meaning that they may cross the boundaries of culture in the creation of the new, and this newness may include shifting the use of a word (idiosyncratic usage). Here creative authors negotiate between their desire for communication (which requires linguistic conservatism) and their desire to create new meaning (which requires linguistic innovation).⁵³

Our readers also begin with the stance of conventionalism. Under the reasonable expectation that authors desire communication, they apply the language conventions of the intended audience, based on an optimism that they will create the same emergent properties from the same collection of letters as did the author. But when they encounter a disjunction, they must also allow for the possibility of the author's subjective additions. This is the radical intra-cultural disjunction, where readers recognize that the conventions have been violated, and if they wish to hear the author's voice, they must also violate these conventions.

5 The Experience of Event: Words to Sentences

Next, we move to higher levels of organization, beginning with collections of words into a simple sentence. Consider the patterned collection: "Jordan painted the toy cat." Here readers do not simply encounter a collection of linguistic meanings (words), but recognize the new properties of declaring, agency, causation, and human involvement. Again, we turn to the language of emergentism. These new properties are not found in any of the individual

53 This powers David Davidson's distinction between a passing and prior theory of interpretation ("A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 473–483).

words, which is the characteristic of non-reducibility. As Ricoeur writes: “The sentence is not a larger or more complex word. It is a new entity ... A sentence is a whole irreducible to the sum of its parts.”⁵⁴

Furthermore, these properties exhibit dependence upon their compositing elements, so that a repetition of the same sentence in the same cultural moment is expected to result in the same emergent properties (declaring, agency, causation, and involvement). By way of clarification, we are using ‘the same cultural moment’ as part of an ideal communication situation, where all participants are in the same social context, are from the same speech community, and employ language conventionally.⁵⁵ This allows us to formulate the central issue for this section: within the intended audience, as a type of ideal communication situation, *do similar emergent properties arise across the broad spectrum of readers?* If the emergent properties are similar, then there is a basis for talking about the voice of the author, for the emergent properties will be similar for author (as a reader of his or her own work) and actual readers. If not, then properties and experiences may be radically different for each reader, no matter which culture is employed, and the notion of ‘the author’s voice’ is just more nonsense.

Certain examples suggest that the emergent properties are similar. Consider our example: “Jordan painted the toy cat.” When this sentence is considered by itself (issues of context occur at the next level of organization), a collection of American readers from the early twenty-first century can come to consensus over the type of speech act it represents (assertive), as well as that Jordan is the one doing the painting (agency, causation) and that Jordan is painting a toy (not a live mammal). Our analysis is similar with the speech acts variations: “Jordan, paint the toy cat” (directive), “Jordan, thank you for painting the toy cat” (expressive), and “I will paint the toy cat” (commissive). This group will not come to consensus on all issues—is she painting a toy mammal or fish—but even here they can agree that the word ‘cat’ is ambiguous. Our point is not that all readers in the ideal communication situation create identical emergent properties, but that the larger group can agree on similar emergent properties (type of speech act, agency) and similar ambiguities (‘cat’ has a limited set of uses), and even that certain readings do not fit (‘Jordan’ does not refer to a river).

This similarity even extends to emotional experiences. When confronted with the simple sentence: “Jesus wept” or “Antiochus smiled,” readers in the

54 Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 7.

55 On the problems inherent in communication, even with the use of an ideal communication situation, see Eric Douglass, *Reading the Bible Ethically: Recovering the Voice of the Author* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 191–195.

same cultural moment experience similar emotions, based on the activation of common emotion programs.⁵⁶ T.S. Eliot emphasized this notion in his “objective correlative,” where he posited that emotions are produced by “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be *the formula of that particular emotion*.”⁵⁷ Eliot’s point is that the narrative production of emotions is the result of literary technique, so that similar emotions are produced for all his readers. Of course, cultures add interpretive overlays to the brute sensation of an emotion, and these produce variations in meaning. But such overlays are a cross-cultural issue, and not for two readers in the same cultural moment.

At this point, one might object that the emotions attached to a simple sentence cannot be verified. The notion of similar experience can only be assumed, based on the assumption that the emotion programs have similar triggers and outputs. But when such a sentence is embedded in a larger story, the surrounding statements, behavior, and commentary may be used for verification. So, following the sentence: “Antiochus smiled,” we find Antiochus state: “Young men, with favorable feelings I admire each and every one of you” (4Mac. 8:5). This validates the emotion suggested by the smile, namely, that it is a sincere expression of “positive feelings” towards the men.⁵⁸ In the same way, the surrounding statements may indicate deception, as where the emotion attached to: “Judas kissed Jesus,” is rooted in acts of betrayal. But in both cases, surrounding materials validate either the emotion or the deception, so that the notion of similar experiences is verified by the context.

Nevertheless, in certain places this similarity breaks down, resulting in miscommunication. These places are generally marked by disjunctions. In cross-cultural disjunctions, readers are employing a different cultural system than the author, so that similar meanings and experiences cannot occur. In moderate intracultural disjunctions, each is applying different systems within the same culture, and until this is recognized, similar experiences cannot occur. In radical intracultural disjunctions, the author has crossed the boundaries of culture in creating something new, and until readers also cross these boundaries,

56 See Chapter 3 for discussion. Everyone with the program will experience that program’s output (with variability in the regulation), and the output is assumed to be similar based on behavioral verification.

57 T.S. Eliot, “Hamlet and His Problems,” *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev., ed. Hazard Adams (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1992), 766; italics added.

58 The relation of smile to emotions is debated, but this one is from James Russell, Jo-Anne Bachorowski, and Jose-Miguel Fernandez-Dols, “Facial and Vocal Expressions of Emotion,” *Annual Review of Psychology* (2003): 329–349, accessed April 11, 2017, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

similarity cannot occur. Using materials from this section, we may now pose a deeper understanding on how such disjunctions occur and are resolved.

We begin this discussion by asking if such disjunctions are ontological or epistemological in nature. Epistemological types occur where the author designed the text to be understandable. Because the author designed the text using public language, these disjunctions are theoretically resolvable within the language systems. Examples include cross-cultural disjunctions, where the disjunctions are resolved by selecting the language of the intended audience. Similarly, the moderate intracultural disjunction is resolved by selecting the appropriate figure of speech. Ontological types occur where the author designed the text to be ‘not understandable,’ as in the use of deliberate ambiguity. Such examples are theoretically unresolvable in the language system. An example of deliberate ambiguity is the phrase ‘love of God’ in the Gospel of John, where the author designed the phrase to have both meanings of ‘God’s love of us’ (subjective genitive) and ‘our love of God’ (objective genitive).

Authors as diverse as E.D. Hirsch and Stanley Fish have suggested that a conventional understanding of language cannot resolve language disjunctions, suggesting that the issues are ontological in type. However, both authors write as if they expect their own audience to understand their own explanations. Both argue as if they understood the original intent of the misunderstood texts, fathomed the ways in which readers misunderstood them, and believed that they could communicate all of this to their own culturally located audience—a task that would require full knowledge of authors, original readers, and their own readers! In short, they write as if they consider misunderstandings *to have epistemological elements that are resolvable via their explanations*. While both posit ontological components, their explanations suggest that the relevant issues are epistemological in nature. For Hirsch, readers only need to have the appropriate mindset (an “imaginative reconstruction of the speaking subject.”⁵⁹), while for Fish, readers need access to the original situation and perspective (“sentences emerge only in situations, and within those situations, the normative meaning of an utterance will always be obvious or at least accessible”⁶⁰).

In the end, a deep ontological indeterminacy underlies all language, based on the mechanisms of language acquisition, so that complete communication

59 E.D. Hirsch, “Objective Interpretation,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1707.

60 Stanley Fish, “Is There a Text in This Class?” in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986), 526.

is a myth.⁶¹ Nevertheless, this indeterminacy is not so great as to cancel 'similar experiences,' as can be shown by behavioral verification. For this reason, our general approach to disjunctions is epistemological in nature. Only when the tools within the language system are exhausted (redundancy, circularity, association, and analogy) do we claim ontological indeterminacy.

A central implication is that readers can modify their use of language to resolve disjunctions. But this suggests a paradox: readers use their own culture to locate and give meaning to a text, so how is it possible to create a meaning that does not fit into their culture, i.e., how is it possible to create a disjunction? Readers locate the marks of a text in their culture, and the culture provides those marks with meanings. Readers then fit those meanings into the social institutions of their culture. This suggests that readers shape all textual elements in conformity with cultural systems, so that reading simply reproduces those systems.⁶² Readers only see what their culture allowed them to see in the first place. This is the general argument of cultural determinism. Hence, to create a disjunction, these culturally located readers must somehow defy the shaping capacity of language and culture.

When readers remain at the level of words, cultural reproduction is the rule. Culture provides readers with a language system where word usage is shaped by a common symbolic universe. But when readers move to the level of sentence, the emergent properties are tied to the sentence's internal design—not the culture's symbolic universe. This is a second system for shaping meaning, that exists alongside the symbolic universe. For example, agency and causation are not aspects of the words themselves, but are emergent properties that occur at the level of the sentence. Hence arises the situation where words that were culturally located may be combined in such a way as to produce agency and causation that are not part of existing culture.

Consider an example from the modern genre of fantasy, where a narrator states: "Felecia spoke words of power and the earth shook." Modern readers locate every word of this sentence in their symbolic universe, as supplied by modern culture, with its existent understanding of plate tectonics. But this

61 Cf. Quine's indeterminacy of translation (Chapter 2, fn. 4). In short, a person never fully knows the ontological structure that another person maps onto words, but only what is sufficient for coordination of behavior. The remainder is epistemically private, as textured by the memory of formative experiences. On the relation of epistemically private elements to language, cf. Edward Craig, "Meaning and Privacy," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Bob Hale and Crispin Wright (Malden: Blackwell, 1997), 127–145.

62 This is a strong form of cultural determinism. Cf. Maynard: "New Historicism and American cultural Studies ... spin a web of cultural determinism to replace author determination" (*Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers*, 74).

understanding of the word 'earthquake' does not control the type of causation posited by the sentence. Causation is an emergent property, and this sentence produces a type of causation that modern culture explicitly rejects. Indeed, the language system can be used to express any type of causation.

This explains how modern humans reject word magic (their symbolic universe), but still use language as an invisible, binding force when christening a ship or forming a verbal contract. In principle, this is little different from modern readers engaging a text from a different culture. Modern readers may begin with a culture where wind is the result of physical causation, but the text's sentences are designed so that the emergent properties are spirit causation, intention, and agency. Modern readers have created something that their symbolic universe cannot account for.

This helps explain cross-cultural disjunctions, where readers construct a form of causation that is not supported by the modern symbolic universe. The sentence's emergent properties have produced a type of causation that the readers' culture rejects. This allows readers to recognize where they have employed a different symbolic universe than occurs in the text.⁶³ These places are generally marked by miscommunication and disjunctions, with the type of disjunction suggesting where the problem occurred and how it is resolved. The relevant aspects of such disjunctions are epistemological in nature, and so are theoretically resolvable. In a cross-cultural disjunction, readers only need to change the reading-self to mirror the intended audience. The correction of this issue, though a more complete characterization of the intended audience, places readers back on the path to similar experiences.

To this point, we have described the 'level of sentence' as consisting of parts and emergent properties. Now we turn to relations between these. In systems utilizing emergentism, the compositing parts determine the emergent properties, but the emergent properties also limit the variability inherent in those parts. This suggests a form of the hermeneutic circle, where the emergent properties function as the whole that textures and even restricts the use of words. In short, the sentence assumes privilege over its parts. Consider the sentence: "Will you pen a speech for me?" The word 'pen' by itself could be used as a noun (enclosure for animals) or a verb (to write). At the level of isolated words, readers cannot ascertain which to apply. But the whole determines the applicable use of pen, so that virtually all readers would apply the verbal form here.

63 This may be coordinated with our discussion of cross-cultural disjunctions in Chapter 2, where authors embed whole systems within a text, so that when readers employ a different system, various textual elements cannot be made to fit.

Indeed, to do the opposite, by giving words priority over sentence, is to suggest that the sentence offers no criteria for determining word usage, and so *to nullify the emergent properties of the sentence*. In the end, it is clear that words and sentences exist in a dialectical relationship, so that neither can be excluded from the making of meaning, but it is also clear that higher levels of organization limit the variability inherent in lower-level elements. The emergent aspects of sentence assume ontological priority over their compositing elements. This principle will assume increasing importance at higher levels of organization, such as genre.

Of course, there are a number of objections to these ideas. Postmodern critics are quick to note that there is no necessary reason for requiring that the whole assumes privilege, or even that the whole be created by readers. Instead, these critics privilege fragmentation, and celebrate the free-play allowed by polysemy, associative thinking, and “noninferential associations.”⁶⁴ For Derrida, this is grounded in the recognition that “the nature of the field—that is, language and a finite language—excludes totalization. The field is in effect that of play, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions.”⁶⁵

The resolution to the argument between those privileging ‘wholes’ and those privileging ‘fragmentation’ is beyond the scope of this project. Suffice it to say that both sides can marshal theoretical and pragmatic evidence to support their own assumptions. But our system begins with the assumption that writing is an intentional act, meaning that authors begin with the desire to say something, and this implies that the text is coherently organized to reproduce that something. Variability and indeterminacy still occur in language, but to the degree that authors are aware of it—as readers of their own texts—they also function as the final editor over this variability.⁶⁶ As Bakhtin puts it, a word “becomes ‘one’s own’ only when the speaker populates it with his own intention ... adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention.”⁶⁷ Some miscom-

64 Stephen Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 147.

65 Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev., ed. Hazard Adams (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1992), 1123.

66 To this we may add the problem of intertextuality, where such connections “are endless” and so “deconstructs every closed way of reading” (Stefan Alkier, “From Text to Intertext: Intertextuality as a Paradigm for Reading Matthew,” *HTS Theologiese Studies* 61, no. 1/2 [2005]: 17, accessed May 5, 2014, doi:10.4102/hts.v61n1/2.421). However, Alkier still concludes: “But in ethical terms not every sense is a good one. If I had to write a sequel to this essay, it would be an ethics of reading” (Ibid.).

67 M.M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed.

munication, fragmentation, and slippage occurs in every reading of every text, given our understanding of culture as non-leveling, but this in no way negates the possibility of general coherence, especially given our capacity to recognize and correct miscommunication (disjunctions, textual resistance).

Finally, we need to address two relevant objections from Stanley Fish. First, he suggests that readers contextualize material from within their own interpretive community: "Meanings come already calculated ... because language is always perceived, from the very first, within a structure of norms."⁶⁸ These norms structure the reading process, so that readers only find what these norms allow from the marks on the page. Now, this might be the case if disjunctions did not occur. But Fish begins his article with a misunderstanding (moderate intracultural disjunction), and just this suggests that the norms have broken down: the language and behavior were not shaped in accordance with that norm, so that the disjunction was recognized. One may think of cross-cultural disjunctions in the same way, as places where a sufficient and consistent level of disjunctions suggests a different set of norms. In both, the structure of the text intrudes, as a form of textual resistance, so that readers recognize that other norms are in play.

This brings us to Fish's second challenge, where he notes that even if readers could escape their community's norms, there would be *no way of grading the available sets of norms so as to privilege any one over the others*. Many interpreters assign no more value to communication than to any other cultural value (pleasure, creativity, freedom, politics, etc.). Our readers address this issue through ethics, where all humans have intrinsic value, so that their voices should not be silenced or manipulated. It is this assumption that prompts our readers to privilege communication over other values, so that they begin with

Michael Holquist, transl. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), Kindle edition, Kindle locations 4132–4133; cf. 4172–4178. Michael Vines summarizes on Bakhtin: "It is therefore not the individual words, considered in isolation from one another, that express the author's intention but the complex dialogic interaction between words pregnant with heteroglot potential. Thus, we must discern the meaning of a text by considering the work as a whole ... A text is a unified utterance" (*The Problem of Markan Genre: The Gospel of Mark and the Jewish Novel*, Academia Biblica No. 3 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002], 51).

- 68 Fish, "Is There a Text," 531. Fish locates these within specific interpretive communities. However, an empirical study of readers by David Miall and Don Kuiken concludes: "These results suggest that foregrounding achieves its effects in relation to norms of language outside of literature, rather than, as Stanley Fish has insisted (Fish, 1980), in relation to norms established within especially trained communities with particular perspectives on what is literary" ("Foregrounding, Defamiliarization, and Affect: Response to Literary Stories," *Poetics* 22 [1994]: 404).

the desire to hear the author's voice. Systems privileging other values function as second readings, and so as other voices in the broader conversation over the text.

6 The Experience of Event: Beyond Sentences

At the next level of complexity, simple sentences are grouped together in compound sentences and paragraphs. For narrative texts, this level results in the emergent qualities of event, causal/temporal sequencing, and multiple languages. Others have also noted this:

But even more problematic is the common assumption that such meaning as a whole work might have is on par the meaning that individual sentences have ... thematic content is not semantic content, and someone fully apprised of a work's semantic content might still fail to appreciate what it is about in this literary sense.⁶⁹

Now the goodness in which we take an interest (when our interest is aesthetic) is something that arises out of the ingredients of the poem itself: the ways its verbal parts—its structure and texture—combine and cooperate to make something fresh and novel emerge ... They work by manipulating our understanding of parts to make us experience a whole that contains something not in the parts.⁷⁰

Let us begin with the emergent property of sequencing. As examined earlier, event is tied to the notion of change, and this suggests a temporal and causal framework. The beginnings of such frameworks may emerge in simple sentences, such as: "In the afternoon, Jordan painted a toy cat." But the sequencing of such states only emerges in compound sentences: "Jordan painted a toy cat and the next day she played with it."⁷¹ The notions of 'before this' or 'after that' are emergent qualities, so that events occur as a change from one state to another. The case is similar for causal sequencing, which posits a connec-

69 Peter Lamarque and Stein Olsen, "The Philosophy of Literature: Pleasure Restored," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 205–206.

70 Beardsley, "The Authority of the Text," 34; author's parenthesis.

71 Simple sentences may imply sequencing, as in: 'He ran after this event;' but 'this event' stands for further content and is only resolved as a compound sentence.

tion between related states.⁷² “Jordan painted a toy cat” contains the notion of causation, but sequencing requires readers to imagine a state where the cat was not painted.

However, event is not simply a collection of sequencing frameworks. Event itself is an emergent property. Sequencing frameworks are part of its compositing elements, so that event is contingent upon these frameworks (dependence), but not reducible to them (non-reducibility). Event occurs as a happening, in which there is a setting, a change in states, and a sequencing framework connecting these elements.⁷³ These compositing elements may even include non-real objects (a unicorn), processes (magical causation), and frameworks (reverse time), but this does not preclude event or make it incomprehensible. It only produces a different kind of event, which the reading-self still experiences as real.

Furthermore, literary events are designed for the reader to enter. Most narratives accomplish this with the process of identification, so that the reading-self assigns his or her way of being in the storyworld to a character. Once identification has occurred, the reading-self experiences yet another emergent quality, that of immediacy in the event. Readers of the Parable of the Day Laborers (Mt. 20:1–16) expect their longer workday to earn higher wages, as if they were in that event. Literary events even involve the readers’ emotions and thinking, so that literary event is best characterized as a participatory experience. As one group summarizes:

Transportation into a narrative world is a state of cognitive and emotional immersion in a text ... Transported readers are completely focused on the story world; they may lose track of time, fail to notice events going on around them, and experience vivid mental images of settings and characters.⁷⁴

72 Simple sentences may imply causal sequencing, but only by implying further content which is resolved as a compound sentence. On causation, cf. Harold Langsam, “Kant, Hume, and our Ordinary Concept of Causation,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54, no. 3 (Sept 1994): 625–647. Quantum physics posits other forms of causation, but these are only understood against a background of causal frameworks.

73 The change may occur in any element, including the setting or evaluative perspective. In the feeding stories, the disciples do not change (‘lack of faith’), though the setting (bread, hunger) and the evaluative perspective (‘they should have learned’) do.

74 Melanie Green, Sheryl Kass, Jana Carrey, Benjamin Herzig, Ryan Feeney, and John Sabini, “Transportation Across Media: Repeated Exposure to Print and Film,” *Media Psychology* 11 (2008): 513, accessed Apr. 11, 2017, doi: 10.1080/15213260802492000. They suggest three components to transportation: “cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and men-

At this point, the distinction between literary event and propositional language is easily demonstrated. Consider the Parable of the Workers, which has an application attached to the parable: "So the first will be last." When heard by itself, the application has nothing of the experience of the parable, where readers expect to get ahead, have this hope dashed, feel cheated by the master, and are angered at being treated unfairly. In short, propositional language does not create event, *for it lacks the necessary compositing elements for this emergent property*. Functionally, it is designed for the transfer of information, while literary event is designed for participatory experience.

The New Hermeneutic, an interpretive school from the twentieth century, also emphasized the event-nature of this kind of language, dubbing it 'language event.' Anthony Thiselton provides a description of how such readers enter the parable: "The hearer does not merely observe this 'world' as a spectator; he enters it, and becomes a participant. He actively assumes one of the concrete roles that it offers him."⁷⁵ Here we see the language of entrance and identification. Thiselton characterizes the experience of event in a way that mirrors our own:

When a parable functions as a language-event, therefore, it first of all creates a world in which distinctive values and verdicts confront the hearer at a deeper level than that which may be reached by theoretical discussion. The language of Jesus 'strikes home' ... it grips him at every level of attitude, thought, and emotion.⁷⁶

A final emergent quality, at the level of paragraph, is that of multiple languages. Literary events do not deal solely in linguistic meaning, despite the fact that they are composed of words. They almost always 'speak' in other languages, such as kinesthetic (gestural) and emotional languages. Within a narrative simulation, readers imagine various elements of the storyworld, and these often include physical actions and facial expressions. When readers imagine a trigger

tal imagery" (Ibid. 514; for further references, see Chapter 4, fn. 22). 'Transportation' is equivalent to our 'entrance into the event.'

75 Anthony Thiselton, "Parables, 'World' and Eventful Speech: 'The Parables as Language-Event: Some Comments on Fuchs's Hermeneutics in Light of Linguistic Philosophy,'" in *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, compiled by Anthony Thiselton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 420. The New Hermeneutic was based on Heidegger's thinking, and so reflects an untenable romanticism, through these authors did have an organic understanding of event.

76 Ibid., 424.

for an emotion program, such as crying or smiling, the text will be accompanied by an emotional vocabulary. Similarly, when readers imagine a young child pointing to a brightly colored ball, it will be accompanied by a gestural vocabulary.

Such vocabularies emerge at the level of sentence, but here are only single words without any syntax, and so are not yet a language. Let us return to the child pointing to a ball. 'Pointing' is a gestural word, but is so ambiguous that little communication occurs: is she simply attracted to the bright colors (Look!), does she want the ball (I want!), or is she registering fear (Look out!). But meaning becomes increasingly clear when other vocabulary bits are added, such as smiling, opening and shutting one's hand, and crawling toward the ball (I want the ball). Furthermore, these words exhibit a syntax, and so are ordered in a particular way. For example, imagine that the child looks at the ball, smiles, extends her arm toward the ball, and opens and closes her hand. This amounts to a kinesthetic sentence: 'I want the ball.' But now imagine that these same bits are ordered differently: the child smiles at her mom and dad, then opens and shuts her hand in the direction of her mom and dad, then turns her face toward the ball. This jumbling of the syntax results in a garbled meaning—indeed, it forms nonsense.

Authors who study dance have also noted the presence of a kinesthetic vocabulary and syntax. Judith Hanna writes: "Both dance and verbal language have vocabulary (steps and gestures in dance), grammar (rules for justifying how one dance movement can follow another), and meaning."⁷⁷ She concludes: "In essence, dance is a kind of thinking—an ability to solve problems through control of one's bodily motions."⁷⁸ More broadly, Howard Gardner suggests the existence of a bodily-kinesthetic intelligence that "provides individuals with the option of mobilizing bodily capacities in order to communicate diverse messages."⁷⁹ Narratives may only deal with simulated actions, but this does not change the kinesthetic vocabularies.

Indeed, should a fictional narrative develop a series of connected actions, an actual conversation may occur. Consider the following 'kinesthetic conversa-

77 Judith Hanna, "The Language of Dance," *The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 72.4 (April 2001): 41, author's parentheses, accessed Sept. 1, 2007, Academic One-File. Cf. Francis Sparshott, "The Philosophy of Dance: Bodies in Motion, Bodies at Rest," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 279.

78 Hanna, "The Language of Dance," 40.

79 Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 224.

tion' from the book *Shattered*, where an angry father approaches his daughter: "He bristles. Towering over me, he rubs his nose with his knuckle. Then quickly, he moves toward me. Mom appears, gets in between us. He stops."⁸⁰ For a New Testament example, consider the kinesthetic conversation in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, where the language of the priest/Levite ("passed by on the other side") is contrasted with that of the Samaritan ("went to him ... bandaged his wounds ... poured oil and wine on them ... placed him on his own animal."). Also consider the conversation created by the shifting actions of the younger son and father, in the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

The sequencing of emotions also suggests an emotional language. William Olsen writes that emotions are "a sort of wordless language, a language of neural impulses but a language even so."⁸¹ Here emotional vocabulary also occurs in a syntax. Consider how the emotions of Elizabeth are arranged in *Pride and Prejudice*, so that readers recognize stages, beginning with disgust and revulsion, moving through respect and admiration, beset by occasional confusion and embarrassment, and leading up to love. Similarly, David Herman notes how a character in *The Dead* "experiences emotions progressing from jealousy and fear through empathy and resignation, along the way building a new emotional vocabulary with which to understand Gretta, the past, and himself."⁸²

The existence of multiple languages raises the possibility of interactions among these. When these languages speak univocally, mutually validating the same message, the resulting event can be overwhelming—what was often termed 'the sublime' in ancient literature. As one author summarizes: "(The sublime) is a quality which amazes and astonishes rather than persuades in ordinary, gentle ways."⁸³ But these languages may also contradict each other, and this especially happens when characters engage in manipulation and deception. In such instances, the languages come apart, so that each may be easily seen. A clear example is a cigarette commercial, where the linguistic language declares that "smoking causes lung cancer," and yet the emotional and kinesthetic languages are shouting: "You will only find love when you smoke." Examples also occur in New Testament literature, as where Judas gives Jesus a

80 Kathi Baron, *Shattered* (Lodi: WestSide Books, 2009), 24.

81 William Olsen, "Poetry and Emotion," *Chicago Review*, 44, no. 3–4 (Summer 1998): 148, accessed Aug. 31, 2007, Academic OneFile.

82 David Herman, "Cognition, Emotion, and Consciousness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 255–256.

83 Donald Russell in addressing Longinus ("Greek Criticism of the Empire," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Classical Criticism*, vol. 1, ed. George Kennedy [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1989], 307, parenthesis added).

kiss. Here the emotional language tied to kiss, separates from the linguistic and kinesthetic languages of betrayal from the previous pericope. Similarly, consider Jn. 12:5–6, where Judas speaks:

“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?” He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.

Here Judas’ linguistic language, about selling and giving to the poor, is contradicted by Judas’ kinesthetic language, where he steals from the group’s funds.

These various emergent properties allow us to address the way in which event is assimilated. Reading a narrative paragraph is a temporal (diachronic) process: readers begin with the opening word and move through the opening sentence and paragraph. The further readers move into the paragraph, the more complicated this temporal processing becomes. As Iser notes, readers “look forward ... look back ... decide ... change our decisions ... form expectations ... are shocked by their nonfulfillment.”⁸⁴ While emergent properties begin at various places in the paragraph, the initial synthesis—the initial whole—is formed at each event’s boundaries. Indeed, Speer’s group has shown that readers segment texts “into discrete events,” and that this “may reflect the existence of a general network for understanding event structure.”⁸⁵ Event is chunked into wholes at its boundaries. If this is the case, then the basic unit of narrative is event, so that stopping after individual sentences to formulate meaning is problematic.⁸⁶

This is important because of the notion of privilege. There is always some variability in the meaning of a sentence, given the nature of language and culture. The larger whole of event exhibits privilege over its compositing elements (sentences), so that its emergent properties limit this variability. Hence, meaning is not formed at the end of each sentence, but at the end of each event. To do the opposite, and privilege the compositing elements, is to suggest that a paragraph is fundamentally reducible to its sentences, *and so to nullify the*

84 Wolfgang Iser, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” in *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 54.

85 Speer, et. al., “Human Brain Activity,” 454.

86 This suggests that meaning is not independent of the formal units of a narrative, though some suggests otherwise (cf. Stanley Fish “Interpreting the Variorum,” in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins [Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980], 176).

emergent properties of event. This privilege even extends over and may change the sentence's speech acts, causation, emotions, and perspective.

Let us illustrate with our former example: "Jordan painted the toy cat." Earlier we noted how this sentence limits the uses of cat, but that readers still could not decide if cat referred to a toy mammal, fish, or bulldozer. But now consider the following:

Daniel told Jordan to fix the 'meow' squeaker in the toy cat. But Jordan ignored the order, and instead slapped some paint on it. Now Daniel was angry. He stormed into the office of his boss and shouted: "Jordan painted the toy cat! But I told her to fix it!"

Here the larger event restricts the variability allowed at the level of sentence, so that 'cat' cannot refer to a fish or bulldozer. The whole assumes priority over the variability at the level of sentence. Furthermore, the whole may shift the function of the sentence. The simple sentence: "Jordan painted the toy cat," is an assertive without any emotional content. But when this sentence is embedded in the above paragraph, it functions as an angry accusation with an assumed demand (via conversational implicature) for correcting Jordan's behavior. A similar analysis applies to Jesus' apparent questions: "Where is your faith?" (Lk. 8:25) and "Why are you talking about having no bread?" (Mk. 8:17), which also function as accusations with an implicit demand.

Privilege may also be illustrated in the property of multiple languages. The isolated sentence: "Judas approached Jesus to kiss him" (Lk. 22:47), allows for multiple kinesthetic meanings and emotional attachments. But the event assumes privilege over this sentence, selecting a particular emergent property for this kiss: it is an ironic sign of betrayal and antipathy. Virtually all readers from the intended audience would construct this same property, given the narratorial explanations (Lk. 22:3), inside views (Lk. 22:6), kinesthetic language (Lk. 22:5), Jesus' mindreading capacity (Lk. 22:22), Jesus' direct comments (Lk. 22:48, 53), and validating behavior responses (linguistic comments: Lk. 22:49; kinesthetic acts: Lk. 22:50–54). Indeed, this event even assumes privilege over the type of speech act: the isolated sentence is an expressive, revealing Judas' emotions toward Jesus, but in the event it is changed to a declarative ('this is the man you are after').

Next, we turn to the issue of similarity of experiences. There is a tendency to assume that events are subjectively experienced, and so are both private and radically open. This results in each reader, including the author-as-reader, creating his or her own unique meanings, so that the notion of communication is compromised. But does the subjective experience of an event necessarily mean

that the emergent properties cannot be similar? Virtually all readers recognize that Judas' kiss is not a sign of friendship and that Jesus is sad at the death of Lazarus. There are no historical audiences that express glee at the final scene of *Oedipus* or *Romeo and Juliet*. This is the larger point of Eliot's discussion on emotions, where he expects the specific aspects of an event to be "the formula of that particular emotion," so that all readers produce the same emotion.⁸⁷ Similarly, Aristotle outlines the specific types of situations that create the emotions of fear and pity.⁸⁸

At this point, we may stop to summarize our larger discussion on the similarity of emergent properties. We began this discussion at the level of simple sentences, using the examples of "Jesus wept" and "Antiochus smiled." Each evokes inner emotions, and so seems private in nature. But imagining these facial expressions produces triggers for universal emotion programs, and so results in a common word of emotional vocabulary for that culture.⁸⁹ Next we concluded that the emotional and kinesthetic vocabularies are arranged in a syntax. Our suggestion, here, is that readers in the same cultural moment understand these languages because they are conventional in nature. If this were not the case, then these languages would have no intersubjective criteria for communication, and so—according to Wittgenstein—would not be languages at all.⁹⁰

In short, meaning is not stabilized by the private experiences of authors and readers, but by the public language conventions of a culture *in all the relevant languages*. Authors employ these languages in the construction of events, and so expect relatively common emergent properties—events, experiences, emotions—for their intended audience. This is the basis for suggesting similar experiences for readers in the same cultural moment. Hence, to the degree that readers adopt the culture of the intended audience, they may expect to produce emergent properties that are similar to those of the intended audience, and so to construct events and experiences that are similar to those the author expected.

87 Eliot, "Hamlet and His Problems," 766.

88 Cf. *Poetics*, 52b.

89 Children are taught the names of emotions based on their behavior, which is not private (cf. John Cook, "Wittgenstein on Privacy," in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich [New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], 528–529). The understanding of facial expressions—at the level of basic emotions—appear to be biologic in nature and so are universally grasped (see Chapter 4).

90 For Wittgenstein, a private language is one with no intersubjective criteria, so that communication is not possible; he even rejects the notion of 'private' intrasubjective criteria. See Chapter 2.

Of course, there are caveats to this model, and a short list of these follows. (1) Readers never fully grasp the culture of the intended audience, so that miscommunications occur. (2) Kinesthetic and emotional languages are derived from the linguistic language of the narrative, so compounding the problems of miscommunication and translation. (3) Considerable polysemy occurs in kinesthetic and emotional languages. (4) Oral cultures perform these narratives with different interests and emphases than reading cultures. (5) Social learning within specific communities adds unique ways of assessing situations, triggering emotions, and creating kinesthetic words that may not be captured in a characterization of the general culture. These caveats suggest that emergent properties are constructed in similar but not identical ways, so that meaning is always provisional.

Finally, we need to address one of the implications of this discussion: events cannot be adequately described by any single language. Literary event is an emergent property with compositional elements that include multiple languages. Indeed, events usually emerge at the intersection of multiple languages, where the interactions among these range from mutually validating to mutually exclusive. This brings us to the implication: events, by definition, cannot be adequately described by any single language.

Narrative events are often reduced to the propositional and linguistic language of “the text means this.” The simplest examples are the lesson statements attached to the parables. But the experience of the Parable of the Day Laborers is not identical to “The first shall be last” (Mt. 20:1–16), nor is the experience of the Parable of the Great Banquet identical to “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Lk. 22:2–14). Propositional language lacks the emergent properties of event, and so misses the entrance, participation, and multiple languages upon which that lesson was formed. One cannot, as the positivists supposed, consider event to be little more than an ornamental form of propositional meaning.⁹¹

Thus, it comes as no surprise that the experience of narrative cannot be reduced to character description and plot analysis, or to the narrative structures dealing with time, voice, tone, discourse, perspective, and the like. This is the reason that experienced event seems so far removed from descriptions of that event. Fish is correct to state: “It is the experience of the utterance—*all* of it and not anything that could be said about it, including anything I could

91 Cf. M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 298–333.

say—that *is* its meaning.”⁹² But Fish goes too far when he adds that the experience “is immediately compromised the moment you say anything about it ... we shouldn’t try to analyze language at all.”⁹³ In a similar way, the New Critics and structuralists go too far when they “insist on the autonomy of art, rejecting all attempts to reduce it to a conceptual message pointing toward the real world.”⁹⁴

There are valid reasons for reducing literary events to proposition meaning. Indeed, this reduction *is necessary for narratives to function*. Let us examine how this is done before turning to why it is necessary. Propositional meaning is not disconnected from the event, but is derived from one’s experience of that event. The experience is primary, while the meaning is derivative, secondary, and always subject to revision. Meaning is formed by abstracting the experience of the event to a more elemental shape for each language involved.

Consider the Parable of the Good Samaritan, where the intended audience likely created the meaning: ‘The religious people are not doing the work of God.’ The concrete text does not use the term ‘religious people.’ Rather, readers abstracted ‘priest’ and ‘Levite’ to a more elemental shape for that culture. In the parable, these characters “crossed by on the other side of the road,” which is a kinesthetic language element, and is abstracted to ‘not helping the man.’ Indeed, within the religious institution it is abstracted to ‘not doing the work of God.’ Other kinesthetic elements include: “Went to him and bandaged his wounds ... poured oil and wine on them,” and are abstracted to ‘caring for the man’ and ‘doing the work of God.’ Similarly, readers abstract the emotional content of ‘Samaritan’ to ‘hated outsider,’ and of the Samaritan’s help to ‘shocking behavior.’ These abstractions give readers the elemental shape of the event, stripped of its specifics, while still maintaining a functional equivalence to each language.⁹⁵

Next, we turn to address why is it so important to reduce literary events to propositional language. First, the creation of themes is dependent upon it.

92 Stanley Fish, “Literature in the Reader,” in *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 78, author’s italics.

93 Ibid., 98.

94 Zima, *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory*, 5.

95 Teun van Dijk notes that readers do not so much remember the specifics of stories, but “a higher level, abstract version of it, that is, something that looks much more like a macrostructure of the text” (“On Macrostructures, Mental Models and Other Inventions: A Brief Personal History of the Kintsch-Van Dijk Theory,” *Discourse Comprehension: Essays in Honor of Walter Kintsch*, ed. Charles Weaver III, Suzanne Mannes, & Charles R. Fletcher [Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1995], 390).

Theme formation requires the capacity to abstract generalized meaning bits from the events, and link these bits into a semi-coherent trajectory. The meaning bit that 'the religious people are not doing the work of God' may be joined to other stories about religious leaders, so forming a theme that runs through Luke. A less obvious example involves the Woman with a Hemorrhage and the Raising of the Dead Girl, both in Mark 5. While these are separate events, the author has made it clear that they are connected, as recognized through language analysis. Not only are the events intercalated, but they share the same elements: sick women, uncleanness, the words "twelve" and "daughter," hopeless situations, Jesus appearing ridiculous, miracles occurring in secret, and the notion of faith. The expectation is that readers will abstract each event to generalized meaning bits and link them thematically. The abstractions of each event reveal a broad area of commonness: Jesus cares for the unclean, powerless, and marginalized people in society. Indeed, this was already a theme in Mark, via the events of healing a leper, calling a tax collector, eating with sinners, and healing the unclean man possessed by Legion. The abstracting process reveals a deep connection among these seemingly disconnected events.

Thematic connections are relatively easy to make when the clues are obvious, as when words are repeated (above) or whole events repeated (the two Markan feeding stories). But the abstracting process may also link events that seem quite different. For example, the Exorcism of the Man in the Synagogue (Mk. 1:23–27) and the Reaping on the Sabbath (Mk. 2:23–28) seem to have few connections. But the abstracting process reveals that both are about common actions that occur during sacred time, and so are connected by the theme of 'actions appropriate to sacred time.' Some of Jesus' actions have already suggested appropriate actions during the Sabbath (going to synagogue, reading the Scriptures: Mk. 1:21–22), but these stories extend the boundaries well beyond those of the religious institution.

The second reason for reducing literary event to propositional meaning, is so readers can engage in larger discussions of evaluation, critique, comparison, and translation. Interpretation, at its highest level, brings many voices to the discussion table, each created by a different method of interpretation. At some point, readers use this discussion to evaluate *Canterbury Tales* as androcentric, and then to critique this voice. But critiquing the author's voice is nearly impossible without creating propositional approximations of the experience. This is not simply an academic exercise, but is based on the recognition that narratives create serious meaning that may leave a residue, and so must be evaluated.

Yet readers must not confuse the abstraction with the experience itself. While readers can describe the experience, *this no more substitutes for the event than a description of brush strokes substitutes for a painting*. The meaning of a

narrative is not a point or a lesson, but the experience itself. When readers do create a description of that experience, they need to include all the emergent properties. This description may then be checked against the experience, to see if it is an accurate approximation.

Finally, it is important to note that levels of complexity exist above event, and these have their own emergent properties. The highest levels include 'collections of events' and 'genre,' with the emergent qualities of themes, plot, and appraisals. While this discussion lies beyond the boundaries of the present text, we may still note that higher-level properties exert privilege over lower levels. This is easily seen in genre, which is a traditional collection of conventions that determines how readers approach events. For example, the genre marker 'Once upon a time' causes readers to invoke a specific collection of expectations (imagined characters and events, unusual forms of causation, and an attached moral). While all of these expectations may not be met, readers start with these, so that genre functions as "an interpretive framework, that facilitates an audience's processing and evaluation of a text's form (e.g. poetic devices), content, purpose, and significance."⁹⁶ This framework is very different from that of a history text, where the stories are expected to represent actual events. Hence, genre restricts the use and understanding of its events.

7 Summary

In this chapter, we examined how narrative events are assimilated by readers. The reading-self enters the simulation under the stance of modal realism, where objects, emotions, and speech acts not only appear real, but function normally. This creates the ontological intuition that the storyworld is not just like a real world, but for the reading-self is a temporary actual world. But the actual-self has a different relation to the simulation. Using the stance of moderate realism, the actual-self evaluates the simulation as an extension of the reference world—a possible temporary world—and as such, one with no necessary significance for his or her existence. Instead, the actual-self tracks the evolution of the reading-self to determine if its experiences are appropriate to the actual world. It is this separation, between the experience of the reading-

96 E.R. Wendland, "Toward a 'Literary' Translation of the Scriptures: With Special Reference to a 'Poetic' Rendition," in *Contemporary Translation Studies and Bible Translation*, Acta Theologica Supplementum 2, ed. J.A. Naudé and C.H. van der Merwe (Bloemfontein: University of the Free State, 2002), 171; author's parenthesis.

self and the evaluation by the actual-self, that keeps narrative experience from automatically overwriting the actual-self. Indeed, this separation provides the basis for critique.

Next, we examined how readers move from marks on the page to experienced event. Using the language of emergentism, we showed that a patterned collection of elements results in emergent properties. The level of 'letters to words' results in the property of linguistic meaning. The level of 'words to simple sentences' results in the properties of speech acts, agency, emotions, and causation. The level of 'simple sentences to paragraphs' results in temporal and causal sequencing, multiple languages, and finally event. At each step, the higher-level properties assume privilege, and so texture the multiple uses inherent in the compositing elements.

This analysis also allowed us to engage a central issue in narrative communication: the similarity of experiences among the various readers. Public languages—whether linguistic, kinesthetic, or emotional—have intersubjective criteria that are publicly accessible within the intended audience. Hence, word usage, agency, causation, speech acts, emotions, and events are expected to be similar within the same cultural moment. This suggests that the experience of the events, for the author-as-reader as well as the actual readers, is expected to be similar, as is the story-meaning based on those experiences. Miscommunications and slippages still occur, but these are usually recognizable as disjunctions, and are generally resolvable within the language system. Idiosyncratic elements also routinely occur, as authors use their subjectivity and readers apply their different cultural backgrounds. These may be addressed through larger group discussions, where all engage in dialogue for the "consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views."⁹⁷

97 Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 1.10.

Translating Story-Meaning

In the last several chapters, we explored how readers engage narrative as participatory event, creating and resolving themes in the development of story-meaning. This meaning is local meaning, in that it was designed for a specific storyworld, as constructed by a specific intended audience. This suggests two central issues for the present chapter. First, how do actual readers in an actual world deal with meaning from a storyworld, whether that storyworld is classified as fiction or nonfiction? Authors design their narratives to embody certain meanings, and generally expect readers to accept those meanings as valid. But the actual-self is under no obligation to do so. The actual-self retains the responsibility to decide which meanings are appropriate for his or her existence. Here the concern is that some meanings bypass the normal evaluative mechanisms, and so are uncritically appropriated.

The second issue is that authors design these meanings for a specific audience, and expect these meanings to function normally within that audience's culture. But what happens when the actual-self is from a different culture? First-century readers of the moonstruck child (Mt. 17:15) develop the meaning that the moon is to not to be feared, and this meaning fits into first-century culture, offering hope to people who felt oppressed by such forces. The author was not trying to convince the audience that the moon caused epilepsy, but simply repeating the culturally validated cause for this malady.

In short, the author designed this meaning for a culture with this specific symbolic universe, and never anticipated readers with a modern scientific worldview. So, how do modern readers decide on the validity of meanings that were designed for a different culture? Unless one accepts that story-meanings are universally applicable—an assumption that is sometimes made by literalists—a step of translation is required. While some meanings may be universal, most meanings are rooted in a shifting symbolic universe, so that 'the moon' and 'epilepsy' no longer mean in the same way.

1 Communicating Meaning

One of the central problems in hermeneutics is communication. We laid out our communication model in Chapter 2, where both parties agree to use the same language conventions under an implicit social contract. However, no two

people have exactly the same language conventions, because words are not directly attached to objects. The word 'cat' may refer to the objective mammal sitting on the floor, but only through an intermediate step, where the sounds for cat are metaphorically attached to a mental sense for cat.¹ This mental sense is not part of an objective universe, but of one's mental universe. The mental universe is supplied by one's culture, so that cat is located by that culture's symbolic universe, cultural maps, and social institutions.

Indeed, different cultural moments may use the same word to identify this mammal, but if the worldview has shifted, then 'cat' may mean something quite different. For example, cats were revered and worshipped in ancient Egyptian religion, suggesting a very different symbolic meaning than in modern Egyptian culture. Similarly, 'star' does not simply refer to a point of light in the sky, as if a pure bit of description, nor does 'Samaritan' simply refer to a person from a different geographic region. In the symbolic universe of first-century Judaism, stars were understood as powerful spiritual beings, and a Samaritan as a hated outsider.

To explore this further, let us return to the example of a first-century wind-storm. Storms have a symbolic meaning as part of a first-century system, where they are caused by malevolent spirits with the intent to do harm. Modern readers construct spiritual causation for this event, as causation is an emergent property based on the language system, and not on their personal beliefs. Hence, they produce the following story-meaning: 'Jesus stops the wind-spirits that are trying to kill the disciples.' At the end of reading, the reading-self and actual-self interact, and the actual-self evaluates the validity of the story's events for his or her own existence. But how does the actual-self reconcile wind-spirits with his or her conviction that storms are caused by physical forces? If this meaning is transferred directly into modern culture, with no steps of translation, then the actual-self must abandon his or her conviction that winds are the result of cold fronts and low-pressure systems.

The problem is that these textual meanings were developed for the intended audience, and not any culture with a different worldview. Indeed, our model reader uses first-century culture at almost every step in the construction of meaning. By way of summary, our reader (1) identifies and characterizes the intended audience, (2) adopts that audience's worldview in the overwriting of the reading-self, and so in the construction of the storyworld, (3) identifies with a character overwritten with that worldview, (4) shifts that worldview as

1 This is a version of the Ogden-Richards triangle; see Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 102–103.

guided by the narrative itself, (5) experiences the events under this sequentially modified worldview, and (6) synthesizes the themes and conflicts into semi-coherent meanings within that modified worldview. In short, the reading-self locates every aspect of the event in a first-century worldview, so that any meanings derived are specific to that culture.

Now, an author may hope for his or her meaning to be applicable to all times and all cultures, but no author can reliably predict the shifting attachment of a word to its sense, as these connections are—by definition—arbitrary. Hence, this hope is ill-founded. A text is indexed to a particular cultural moment, and to hear the author's voice, readers must return to this moment. A model for this is a legal will, for while this instrument is activated at a later time, the usage of its words and concepts are constrained to the originating time and context. Similarly, the windstorm only has authorial meaning when grounded in a first-century Mediterranean worldview.

This discussion points to the need for translation. To begin, it is important to note what we are not doing here. We are not translating the experience, as this is impossible. Experience is an emergent property that occurs at the level of event, and such properties cannot be reproduced in linguistic language. But there are ways of moving experienced meaning into propositional language, and this can be translated. Let us begin by summarizing, and then exploring, three such ways. The first way is to only deal with lower-level linguistic structures. Here the translator performs a word-for-word or concept-for-concept translation, and hopes that the higher-level emergent properties—event and experience—are similar to those of the intended audience. But there is no guarantee that emergent properties remain the same across cultures. Indeed, as we will show below, they may be quite different.

The second way is to focus on higher-level literary structures. Here the translator performs an experience-for-experience translation, that is, attempts to create a narrative in modern cultural garb that reproduces the original experience. However, narrative experience is sufficiently complex that one can only reproduce select aspects of the original experience, while ignoring others, and so suffers from the translator's selection bias.

The third way is to reduce the experience to a collection of descriptive sentences, each encoding some aspect of the experienced meaning, and then to translate each sentence into the target culture. Simple sentences are easier to translate, as one is dealing with fewer emergent properties. While this process results in a paragraph of descriptions instead of an event, it gives the most complete account of story-meaning, with all of its emergent properties. Thus, it does not suffer from selection bias. From this collection of descriptive sentences, the translator may then construct a narrative for the target culture, under the

expectation that this new narrative bears a functional similarity to the original experience. Indeed, the translator uses the original experience as a check on the resulting experience.

2 Translating Meaning: Loyalty

We open this discussion with an important distinction, as developed in speech act theory: language both says and does something. A sentence has both descriptive meaning and illocutionary force. “Jordan painted the toy cat,” has content elements, and one could write a commentary on its meaning. But it functions as an assertive, where speakers commit themselves to the truth of the statement. This distinction also applies to narratives.² Authors rarely create stories simply to give information, but have some expectation for that information’s use. As Teun van Dijk notes, “A sequence of speech acts may also constitute, as a whole, a *global speech act*, which is made explicit in terms of *pragmatic macro-structures*.”³

For example, the author of a modern history might anticipate that readers will construct the meaning: “x did y on account of b.” But beyond this, the author expects readers to accept this meaning as factual knowledge—even though the historian could not know x’s reasons for doing y—so that the narrative functions as an assertive. The author of the Parable of the Day Laborers (Mt. 20:1–16) anticipates that readers will create the meaning of radical egalitarianism, but further expects readers to use this in changing their behavior, so that the text functions as a directive. Both aspects of meaning are part of writing as an intentional act, and so represent the goals of the implied authorA.

2 A complete discussion on the saying and doing aspects of literary narrative cannot be addressed here. Technically, these aspects are not separable, but are various aspects of a single phenomenon, so that the separation of form and function, style and rhetoric, and content and illocutionary force are artificial—though still necessary for discussion. Cf. E.R. Wendland’s discussion, using the categories of style (macrostructure, microstructure) and rhetoric (“how the author shaped the text in order to ... persuade his/her intended audience to adopt a certain conclusion, opinion, perspective, conviction, or motivation”) (“Toward a ‘Literary’ Translation of the Scriptures: With Special Reference to a ‘Poetic’ Rendition,” *Contemporary Translation Studies and Bible Translation, Acta Theologica*, Supp. 2, ed. J.A. Naudé and C.H.J. van der Merwe [2002]: 170).

3 Teun van Dijk, “The Pragmatics of Literary Communication,” in *On Text and Context*, ed. Eduardo Forastieri-Braschi, Gerald Guinness, and Humberto Lopez-Moeales (Rio Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1980), 5; author’s italics. He adds that literature “may also have more ‘practical’ pragmatic functions, e.g. be taken as an assertion, warning, congratulation, etc.” (*Ibid.*, 10).

Hence, the translation of narrative meaning is more than just a description of the experience, but must include something of the intended usage, as revealed in the rhetorical elements of the text. In our example of the wind-storm, the descriptive elements may include that Jesus is higher on the map of authority than wind-spirits, but the expected use is to direct readers to live differently, so as not to fear wind-spirits any longer.⁴ In a culture that saw itself under the hand of spiritual forces over which they had no control, this came as genuinely good news.

So, how does a translation of saying and doing occur? Modern translators use a translation brief, which is the “overall guiding plan,” wherein the translator lays out the goals of translation with regard to the target audience’s interests.⁵ In our application, the actual-self is the target audience, so that the actual-self’s interests provide the goals for the overall process. For example, if the actual-self’s interest is in finding existential relevance, then elements not related to this interest will be glossed over. If the actual-self’s interest is in historical research, then the translating process will sidestep literary meaning. So, we begin by asking about the actual-self’s interests, and this returns us to the reader’s initial desire in reading.

For our model reader, the initial desire is to hear the author’s voice without manipulation. To this end, our reader attempts to read the text as the author designed for the text to be read. In operational terms, this begins by projecting a reading-self with the worldview of the intended audience. Only this story-meaning is now indexed to the culture of the intended audience, so that direct appropriation results in distortion. Hence, our translation brief is to formulate the saying and doing components *so that the story-meaning that was experienced in the source culture (reading-self) has an equivalent function in the target culture (actual-self)*.

Within this brief, the central value is loyalty to the originally experienced meaning, and the central goals are to create a functional equivalence of the

4 Note the similarity to conversational implicature (Paul Grice), as the expected use of the Storm at Sea narrative is not explicitly stated, so that the maxim of relation is flouted. The text does assign relevance to issues of identity (“Who is this”) but the meaning is surely broader than this.

5 Wendland, “Toward a ‘Literary’ Translation,” 184. The ‘skopos theory’ shifts the focus of translation from equivalence for its own sake, to relevance for the target audience (cf. J.A. Naudé, “An Overview of Recent Developments in Translation Studies with Special Reference to the Implications for Bible Translation,” *Contemporary Translation Studies and Bible Translation, Acta Theologica*, Supp. 2, ed. J.A. Naudé and C.H.J. van der Merwe [2002]: 51). But others, including the present author, have adapted this to take account of both source text and target audience; cf. Wendland, “Toward a ‘Literary’ Translation,” 178, 184–185.

components and to achieve relevance for the actual-self's culture. Further, these are ranked, with loyalty having the highest value, so that attempts at creating equivalence and relevance are always looped back to the originally experienced meaning. This is simply another way of saying that the author's voice should not be manipulated by placing other goals ahead of loyalty.

Let us take each of these in turn. The translator is loyal to the experienced meaning—as an approximation of the author's voice—so that the translator refuses to alter story-meaning for personal, theological, or cultural interests. As Karl Barth has written: "I cannot ... think it possible for an interpreter honestly to reproduce the meaning of any author unless he dares to accept the condition of utter loyalty."⁶ This requires that all participants in the process, which in this case are the reading-self and the actual-self, begin with a clear understanding of the experienced meaning. While the reading-self already understands the experienced meaning, this is not the case for the actual-self who was always outside of the simulation. But the actual-self can track the sequential overwriting of the reading-self, and so understand how these meanings were developed. Key to this process is the recognition that this 'tracking of the reading-self' is taking place in the source culture. The actual-self tracks the reading-self's understanding of Samaritans and dishonest stewards (*oikonomos*) in his or her memory as first-century events, but also recognizes that these terms function differently in his or her modern culture. Hence, loyalty to the experienced meaning does not allow the translator to use 'Samaritan' or 'steward,' but to select a different term (see next section).

Loyalty also requires that translators avoid injecting various types of bias into the translation. The means of checking for bias is by looping the translated meanings back to the reading-self's experience of the text. This allows translators to recognize where they have modified the story-meaning. Bias is the special problem of the actual-self, who may attempt to domesticate a socially challenging text or remove ethically problematic meanings. But loyalty requires that challenges to culture (e.g., a Samaritan doing the work of God) and ethical problems (e.g., comments about a dishonest steward) be included, with critique following as a second step. Indeed, it is these meanings, as constructed by non-resistant readers, that are the target of critique. As Rabinowitz notes: "Judith Fetterley's 'resisting reader' can come into being only if there is something to resist."⁷ So, where notions of cultural superiority and dishon-

6 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, tr. Edwyn Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 18.

7 Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 86.

est stewards are part of the experienced meaning, they are maintained under the value of loyalty, translated into appropriate garb, and then critiqued by the actual-self.

Of course, loyalty can never be fully achieved, as one's own culture cannot be fully disentangled from the process. The translator's natural language incorporates the assumptions of its own culture. As Duncan Salkeld writes: "Language games may bear dark histories which reach beyond the aesthetic structure of the work of art."⁸ Or as Tim Wilt notes on translation: "A dominant power group's values may shape texts ... obscuring or distorting perspectives and values represented in the source text."⁹ Correctives to this, as suggested by Habermas, involve the use of suspicion that language is ideologically deformed, and exploration of this suspicion via unrestrained dialogue in a diverse group, *so that there are no ideological controls over the discussion*.¹⁰

3 Translating Meaning: Equivalence and Similarity

The second issue involves the notion of functional equivalence, or better, functional similarity. We begin by addressing where this similarity is to occur, and this returns our discussion to the three ways of moving experienced meaning into propositional language (lowest linguistic level, highest literary level, and collection of descriptive sentences). It is tempting to begin with the first path, focusing on the lowest linguistic level in a word-for-word translation, as reading begins with individual words. While such has been done historically, it runs contrary to our principle of privilege: higher-level emergent properties assume privilege over lower elements, so that a word-for-word translation begins at the wrong place. Rather, our translator begins by identifying these higher-level emergent properties, and then finds compositing elements in the target language that result in the same emergent properties.

8 Duncan Salkeld, "New Historicism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 60.

9 Tim Wilt, "A New Framework for Bible Translation," *Contemporary Translation Studies and Bible Translation*, *Acta Theologica*, Supp. 2, ed. J.A. Naudé and C.H.J. van der Merwe [2002]: 148.

10 Esp. cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification," in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Nicholsen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990); Jürgen Habermas, "On Hermeneutics' Claim to Universality," in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985).

Let us consider an example at the level of the simple sentence: "Jordan, paint the toy cat." Our translator does not do a word-for-word translation, with the hope that the translation will produce the emergent property of being a directive speech act. Rather, one begins with the recognition that this is a directive speech act in the source language, searches the target language for how directives are formulated, and uses this form to encode the directive in appropriate words. At the highest levels of narrative, this translator might begin by asking: what genre encodes this type of meaning, what actions encode this kinesthetic language, and what social institutions contextualize this ritual?

Our example might suggest that translators take the second path, which focuses on the highest literary level in producing an experience-for-experience translation. However, the sheer volume of emergent properties, along with the social institutions that locate these, make it impossible to translate all aspects into another language: there is simply too much complexity. This forces the translator to focus on select features. As E.R. Wendland notes: "No single translation can reproduce all three elements—form, content, and function—of the original document."¹¹ Hence, the translator decides which aspects to reproduce by ranking them in accordance with some set of standards, these being either standards of importance to the translator or standards of relevance for the target audience.

For example, Wendland's standard of importance—his central interest—is in a literary translation that privileges literary function, so that a directive in the source language would utilize language with the same function in the target culture.¹² Wendland's example is at the level of genre, where he examines the possibilities allowed in the target language's genres, and applies the one that most closely approximates that of the source text. He concludes that "a poetic, accusatory prophecy such as Obadiah may be more effectively rendered as emotively heightened prose."¹³ In this way the translation can duplicate "the artistic beauty and rhetorical impact" of the text.¹⁴ But his emphasis has consequences on the other areas. Elevating the value of literary function (functional similarity) over form and content, risks loss in these other areas. Wendland

11 Wendland, "Toward a 'Literary' Translation," 180.

12 Wendland writes: "Such an 'ideal' version ... succeeds in proximately matching (relatively so) the sequence of changing of major and minor communicative (e.g. speech-act) functions of the biblical text by the use of suitable micro- (stylistic) and macro-forms (genres) in the target language" (*Ibid.*, 181, author's parentheses).

13 *Ibid.*, 175.

14 *Ibid.*, 179. Note that this is only for the literary aspect; Wendland advocates a more balanced approach for translation in general.

notes this problem: “A great deal of *formal* correspondence with the original text will inevitably be lost ... it is hoped that a high degree of situational and personal ‘relevance’ for the intended audience will be gained.”¹⁵

On account of these problems, our readers take the third path, that of creating a collection of descriptive sentences. This path is rooted in the abstracting process, where translators look for the general or elemental shape of the experience. The goal is to maintain the central functions of the event, while stripping away the cultural specifics. For example, the specific meaning of the Parable of the Good Samaritan includes the notion that the priest and Levite did not help a mugged man, but the abstraction is that the religious people did not help a person in need. The abstracting process is not an attempt to reproduce the experience, but to foreground the centrally meaningful issues.

The reason that our process codes in descriptive language is for the purpose of simplification. Experience and event deal in complex emergent properties, so that it is nearly impossible to create an event that reproduces all the original properties without introducing foreign ones—this was Wendland’s conundrum above. But simple sentences lack the higher emergent properties of event, multiple languages, sequencing, and literary genre. With less complexity, simple sentences can focus on description, so that story-meaning becomes a collection of descriptive statements about event, multiple languages, sequencing, and genre. At this stage, the process is only interested in description; experience is a later step.

This process has two consequences for our project: it simplifies the experience to its centrally meaningful elements, and it locates these elements in translatable categories. Let us turn to each of these using the example of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. To begin, how might the word ‘Samaritan’ be translated? As Samaritans still exist in Israel, one might be tempted to continue using the same term. But this fails to recognize that the categories of meaning have shifted between the two cultures, so that simply repeating ‘Samaritan’ misses the centrally meaningful elements. In first-century Jewish culture, Samaritans were “a representative of one of the hated outgroups.”¹⁶ Samaritans used a variant of ‘my’ religion, were not part of ‘my’ group, and were expected to do harm to ‘my’ people. Hence, the abstracted shape of Samaritan is ‘despised outsider,’ as grounded in the symbolic universe of the intended audience. This

15 Ibid., 192; author’s italics.

16 Philip Esler, “Intergroup Conflict: The Parable of the Good Samaritan in the Light of Social Identity Theory,” *Biblical Interpretation* 8, no. 4 (2000): 342, accessed Sept. 1, 2017, *Humanities International Complete*, EBSCOhost.

shape strips away the peripheral details (geographic location), while maintaining the centrally meaningful elements (religious identity) for this parable.¹⁷

Next, the abstracting process locates this meaning in translatable categories. By this we mean that the process codes the meaning in categories that are common to both cultures. This is not a search for a cultural equivalent, where one looks for a 'Samaritan equivalent' in modern culture. Rather, it goes to the assumption beneath this, namely, that there are deep common categories that allow for similarities or equivalencies to be recognized in the first place. In our example, the categories of meaning for 'Samaritan' in the source language (reading-self), do not match the categories in the target language (actual-self). But both cultures do have the categories of 'despised outsider' and 'religious outcast.' When Samaritan is abstracted to these shapes, the the term is in translatable categories and communication occurs. Hence, the goal for functional equivalence is to abstract the centrally meaningful elements of story-meaning *to the point where the categories for meaning in the source language match the categories for meaning in the target language.*

The concept of common categories is central to our understanding of translation and communication. We began this discussion in Chapter 3, examining the commonness suggested by human universals (e.g., language universals, common experiences), a shared reference world (e.g., human senses, *a priori* categories), and common cognitive programs (e.g., basic emotions, empathy, language center). These represent deep areas of commonality that occur beneath all cultures, though surface categories may code specific objects quite differently. Our suggestion is that all human institutions, including language, are finally rooted in the common reference world bequeathed to us by our common biology and experiences. While these common areas are relatively abstract—space, time, causality, empathy, emotions, senses, hunger, and pain—they still form the primordial fabric upon which language is inscribed. As one moves out of this deep layer of categories, toward intermediate categories and local categories, specific cultural differences emerge.

For example, consider the deep category of time. This category is universal, as one cannot conceive of change without a temporal framework. The intermediate categories, of sacred time and common time, are also nearly universal, but the local categories of clock time and Sabbath are not. The Jewish Sabbath and Christian Sunday are in different local categories, as they occur on different days. But both share the same intermediate category of sacred time, so that

17 Note that this is an interpretive step: the translator decides which of the many elements are central, based on cues in the text. In this parable, the juxtaposition of the priest/Levite to the Samaritan makes it clear that religious identity is central.

understanding and translation is possible. Again, the goal is to create functional similarity by abstracting each aspect of story-meaning to the point where the categories of meaning in the source language match the categories of meaning in the target language. Here we add that these categories may be considerable deeper than their local manifestations.

Let us consider the more extreme example of the windstorm. In first-century culture, windstorms exist in the local category of ‘demonic winds that intend to kill,’ in the intermediate category of ‘malevolent non-human forces that intentionally harm human life,’ and in the deep category of ‘external influences that damage human life.’ While modern readers do not recognize the local category, they do have the intermediate category, as manifested in our understanding of learned racism and institutional evil. If taken to the deep category, modern readers recognize the equivalence to a socially mandated body-image or role. The point, for our discussion, is that local uses of language can be abstracted to the point of shared categories with any other language—because of these deep areas of commonness—and at that level, communication occurs. This also suggests that all New Testament stories, including those about wind-spirits, may have relevance for modern audiences, as we will see in the next section.

While our examples have been limited to words, this process applies to all levels of experienced event and story-meaning. Readers may create descriptive statements about speech acts, text acts, subjective experience, and kinesthetic language. Let us illustrate this aspect of translation with the Reaping on the Sabbath pericope (Mk. 2:23–28). The reading-self enters this event in identification with the disciples, and immediately recognizes the possible Sabbath violation. When the religious authorities point this out to Jesus, we (the reading-self in identification with the disciples) do not know how Jesus will respond. We fear that, as a religious man, Jesus might condemn our actions. But whatever occurs, we know that the evaluative standard is located in his views. When he defends our actions, we recognize that Jesus is participating in a wider discussion on actions appropriate to sacred time. Jesus presents the argument that he, as the authoritative interpreter, gives the proper understanding of Sabbath actions.¹⁸

Next, the reading-self forms the story-meaning that ‘Jesus evaluates picking grain for hunger as an acceptable action on the Sabbath, despite realizing that

18 Robert Stein correctly notes: “The audacity of this claim should not be missed, for in the OT God is the Lord of the Sabbath because he instituted and consecrated it” (*Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 149; cf. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 148).

this is a violation of the religious institution.’ At this point, the actual-self could directly appropriate the story-meaning, with no translation, as the meaning for his or her culture. But as soon as this is looped back to the reading-self’s experiences, a disjunction is created, *as the actual-self’s grasp of picking grain on a Saturday is not remotely similar to the reading-self’s grasp of the same*. For the reading-self, this is a violation of sacred time, while in the actual-self’s culture, this represents trespassing and stealing!

To resolve this, the actual-self creates an account of how the reading-self came to this meaning. The actual-self recognizes that the reading-self began with a modern understanding of Saturday, which was overwritten with the symbolic universe and religious institution of first-century Judaism. This reading-self enters the storyworld believing that the Sabbath is sacred time, that common actions are inappropriate to sacred time, and that picking grain is a common action.¹⁹ This suggests that the disciples’ actions are not just a violation of the institution’s regulations, but a violation of sacred time as instituted by God. These actions are located in the institution’s debate over situations that “resulted in an overriding of Sabbath law.”²⁰ For the actual-self, this account suggests that Jesus’ statements are a unique contribution to the debate from an authoritative position, so that picking grain for hunger is an acceptable action during the Sabbath.

Using this account, the actual-self prepares for translation by abstracting the story-meaning to a more elemental shape: Jesus evaluates common work (picking grain) for genuine human needs (hunger) to be appropriate during sacred time (Sabbath), even if this puts one at odds with one’s religion (Jewish religious institution). At this level of abstraction, many of the categories for meaning are shared between the two cultures, such as ‘genuine human needs’ and ‘religion,’ as well as the emotion of ‘anxiety over violating behavior’ and the text-act of ‘norms for evaluating behavior.’²¹ But the notions of ‘sacred time’ and ‘common work’ are not in common categories: the actual-self and reading-self

19 The prohibition on work was rooted in God’s action as a model for human action. Jonathan Burnside writes: “We would expect to find that everyday activity, or ‘work’, revolved around the mechanics of food production” (“‘What Shall We Do with the Sabbath-Gatherer?’ A Narrative Approach to a ‘Hard Case’ in Biblical Law (Numbers 15:32–36),” *Vetus Testamentum* 60 [2010]: 51–52, accessed Apr. 27, 2017, doi: 10.1163/004249310X12597406253283).

20 Nina Collins, “Healing and Saving Life from Starvation: Mark 2:23–26, 28, Luke 6:1–5 & Matthew 12:1–8: The Sources and Historicity of the Galilean Event,” *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 45, no. 4 (2015): 216–217, accessed Apr. 27, 2017, doi: 10.1177/0146107915608596. For extensive discussion on this issue, see Chapter 2, section Locating the Text.

21 This text-act is similar to Searle’s declarative speech act, but now occurs at the level of event.

still understand these terms differently. Indeed, for the reading-self, violations of sacred time deserve severe punishment, with some texts even calling for death (Jub. 2:27–28)! Clearly, these terms require yet further abstraction.

Again, the actual-self creates an account of the reading-self's experiences, but abstracts Sabbath to deeper categories. The reading-self grasps sacred time as time that is set apart by God for special purposes. Sacred time is set aside for rest, in imitation of the God in whose image humans were made. Violations of sacred time resulted in the pollution of the human and of time itself, with the possibility of devastating results. This suggests that sacred time is not simply another way of naming the Sabbath, but reveals an ontological distinction: it is a different type of time and so must be treated differently. So, the abstraction of sacred time is 'time set apart by God—not by humans—for the purposes of rest and worship.' The actual-self also creates a deeper abstraction of common work. Common work is grasped as the everyday activities associated with food production, repairs, and healing. The deeper category is 'the activities of professional life.' At this level of abstraction, the categories for meaning are relatively common, allowing for the following translation: 'God set apart certain times for rest and worship, but it is still appropriate to engage in the usual activities of one's profession when a genuine human need arises, and one may do so without fear of violating God's design.'²² As such, this pericope is not about a simplistic or naïve legalism, but deals with one's relation to sacred time.

4 Translating Meaning: Relevance

The third central issue in translation is relevance. There are two goals here. The first is to use language in such a way that it is accessible. This is usually characterized by the notions of ease of processing and readability. Studies in readability indicate that reading slows with the excessive use of difficult words, long sentences, foreign phrases, technical words, passive voice, lack of coherence, and the like.²³ Kevin Smith applies this to translation, noting that a singular

22 Similarly Adela Collins: "This position does not go so far as to reject the commandment not to work on the Sabbath ... But it does provide a criterion ... any work that meets a basic and immediate human need is permitted" (*Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007], 203).

23 These are from David Schneider, "An Analysis of Readability Levels of Contemporary Textbooks that Employ a Hybrid Approach to the Basic Communication Course," *Communication Education* 40 (Apr. 1991): 165–171, accessed May 4, 2017, doi: 10.1080/

focus on creating equivalence often results in stilted and ungainly language: “The awkward receptor language idiom that results from attempting formal correspondence drastically increases processing effort, causing the translation to communicate poorly.”²⁴

The second goal is to restore the existential relevance of a text.²⁵ A translated story may be easily accessible but still remain unimportant to modern existence. Let us return to the example of Reaping on the Sabbath, where the unabstracted meaning is ‘Jesus evaluates picking grain for hunger as an acceptable action on the Sabbath.’ While this sentence is meaningful, it is without consequence in the modern reader’s world. The vast majority of modern readers have never picked grain, and certainly not done this in someone else’s field. But it was clearly an important issue for the intended audience, and this suggests that a core human interest is at stake. Before examining how this aspect of relevance is achieved, let us detail what we are not doing, as this suggests the boundaries for this project.

First, we are not suggesting that translators disconnect the text from the culture of the intended audience. Story-meaning is rooted in the original culture, and only comes to presence—makes existential sense—in that culture. Jesus ordering a wind-spirit to silence does not come to presence in modern culture. For some translators, this means that relevance can only be achieved by disconnecting story-meaning from the source culture, turning it into a free-floating saying, and making free-associations in the target culture. This process might suggest that Jesus is telling his followers that the ‘winds of moral change’ or

03634529109378837. Cf. Robert Gunning, “The Fog Index After Twenty Years,” *Journal of Business Communication* 6.2 (Wint. 1969): 12, accessed May 4, 2017, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

24 Kevin Smith, “Translation as Secondary Communication. The Relevance Theory Perspective of Ernst-August Gutt,” *Contemporary Translation Studies and Bible Translation, Acta Theologica*, Supp. 2, ed. J.A. Naudé and C.H.J. van der Merwe (2002): 113.

25 Cf. Francisco Díaz-Pérez: “Relevance Theory is based on the assumption that the addressee will make the effort to process a statement if s/he assumes it to be relevant, that is to say, if s/he considers it will be able to modify or improve his/her cognitive environment or, in other words, his/her assumptions about the world” (“Relevance Theory and Translation: Translating Puns in Spanish Film Titles into English,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 70 [2014]: 109, accessed May 4, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.06.007>; cf. Johanna Sapire, “Gutt’s Relevance-Theoretic Account of Translation: An Account of ‘Translation’ or ‘Non-translation?’” *South African Journal Of Linguistics* 14, no. 1 [Feb. 1996]: 1–7, accessed Sept. 11, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10118063.1996.9724038>). Our system privileges loyalty over relevance, but still values relevance under the conviction that core existential issues are relevant in all cultures so that translatable categories, by definition, include the recognition of relevance.

the ‘winds of war’ are to be silenced. Such associations create interesting and relevant meanings, but do not guarantee any connection to the author’s communication, and so compromise the value of loyalty. Rather, the question is how to restore relevance in such a way that it is still loyal to the experienced meaning.

Second, we are not suggesting that translators reduce the text to a universal structure, so that it is accessible and consequential to all human audiences. Some have taken this path, usually resting on universal types of forms, as in some forms of structuralism. While certain formal characteristics may be common between the source and target cultures, these may miss the centrally meaningful elements. As already noted, a strong emphasis on form compromises content and function, as well as fails to individuate the text for the audience at hand. Instead, the abstraction should be of experienced meaning—an emergent property whose compositing elements include forms—and not form alone.

Third, we are not suggesting that translators only engage textual aspects that are relevant to the target audience. Some have taken this path, based on the notion that all aspects cannot be engaged, so translators might best select “only those that are deemed relevant to the secondary audience.”²⁶ But focusing only on the audience risks bypassing the centrally meaningful aspects of the text—that is, the voice of the author—and can even degenerate into proof texting. Rather, we privilege the centrally meaningful aspects, and suggest that these are attached to existential issues that are always relevant (below). Similarly, we are not suggesting that translators add materials to create relevance, or cut out sections to reduce irrelevance. These paths wrongly elevate the value of relevance over that of loyalty, and so risk manipulating the voice of the author.

The answer to restoring relevance lies in the recognition that human problems are almost always connected to existential issues, and existential issues are rarely unique to any culture. This was Rudolf Bultmann’s point in his demythologization project: the specifics of myth may be culturally located, but the larger point of myth is to show “the fact that man is dependent on powers beyond his control, that man’s problems are answered on a higher level, that his search for the meaning of life is not in vain.”²⁷ These issues are universal, as

26 Smith, “Translation as Secondary Communication,” 112.

27 Markus Barth, “Introduction to Demythologizing,” *The Journal of Religion* 37, no. 3 (July, 1957): 148. Rudolf Bultmann states: “The real purpose of myth is ... to express man’s understanding of himself in the world in which he lives ... (it) should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better still, existentially” (*Kerygma and Myth* [New York: Harper and Row, 1961], 10).

they are central to being human. As Bultmann writes: "Yet man's search ends when he is confronted with the revelation which opens up to every man the true understanding of himself."²⁸

While Bultmann's categories are limited, Marshall Gregory makes the more comprehensive argument. Gregory begins with the suggestion that stories display common human emotions ("fear, grief, hatred, envy, remorse"), motives ("ambition, pride, greed, sex, dominance"), actions ("cruelty, tenderness, work, honesty"), and existential issues ("happiness, despair, loneliness, self-confidence"), so that they engage "universal facts of human nature and experience."²⁹ From this he concludes that stories have a deep relevance in all cultures: "I can recognize, understand, and sympathize with what is represented because the referents are universal to my species."³⁰

This means that those New Testament stories that seem so foreign as to have no relevance may have their relevance restored. Stories about demonic winds, spirits producing sickness, the moon causing epilepsy, the sun not giving its light, and the Bethlehem star may be abstracted to deeper categories, and in these categories address issues of relevance to all. Such communication will need to be supplemented, to bring specificity back into language, and these supplements are checked by looping the translation back to the originally experienced meaning. But the central functions, to address the deepest concerns, needs, and experiences of humans, and so to find their place and identity in God's world, to connect to the divine, and to recognize meaning in the chaos, is maintained.

So, how do readers get to these central issues? To a large extent, this depends on the topic. Some story-meanings are so central to human existence that they are relevant even at a pre-abstracted level. "You shall not kill" may be understood in a variety of ways, but the core ideas are so human that "legal systems and therefore individuals throughout the world recognize that intentional killing without justification or excuse is prohibited."³¹ Such story-meaning is consequential immediately upon its construction. In such cases, story-meaning already exists in common categories and has relevance for both cultures.

28 Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), 379.

29 Gregory, *Shaped by Stories*, 45–46. See our research in Chapter 4, section: "Identification and Investment."

30 Ibid., 46.

31 John Mikhail, "Is the Prohibition of Homicide Universal? Evidence from Comparative Criminal Law," *Brooklyn Law Review* 75, no. 2 (2009): 510, accessed May 15, 2017, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1573194>. Note how this dovetails with Emmanuel Levinas' grasp of the human face and the primal ethical demand (see Chapter 1).

Other story-meanings only become relevant when abstracted to a more elemental shape, as these shapes reveal the deeper existential issues. Let us track this in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. To begin, readers enter the story by identifying with a character. While this story lacks the usual markers for identification, readers might well enter as the priest/Levite, as the expected heroes of the tale.³² The basic shape of the story is, ‘The Samaritan helps the battered person, while the priest/Levite do not.’ Because the priest/Levite left a living person to die on the road, a certain level of horror is attached to this meaning: ‘My God, what is wrong with the priest/Levite!’³³ Because readers identified with the priest/Levite, the story-meaning shifts to include personal involvement: ‘The Samaritan whom I despise helps the battered person, while the priest/Levite, who are ‘my people,’ do not. My God, what is wrong with us!’

At this point, the story is meaningful but not consequential, as most modern readers do not know any Samaritans or Levites. But when this is abstracted to common categories, it becomes: ‘The despised outsider is doing the work of God, while the religious leaders—and I with them—are not. My God, what is

32 Most who write against identifying with the religious leaders fail to take account of various narrative features. So, Bernard Scott has readers identify with the man in the ditch, because the priest/Levite are gone, and we can’t identify with the Samaritan (*Hear Then the Parable* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989], 199). But Scott is assuming that readers know the end of the parable. In a naïve (first time) reading, it is more likely that readers identify with the priest/Levite, and expect them to turn back and help. This is a common literary device, where the hero makes an error and then returns to correct it. On the other hand, Robert Funk has readers identify with the man in the ditch because he is the first on the scene (“The Good Samaritan as Metaphor,” in *Funk On Parables: Collected Essays*, ed. Bernard Scott [Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 2006], 88). But when readers see a victim at the beginning of a story, they expect a hero and generally wait for an appropriate character to appear; this is especially the case when the victim is nameless and faceless (lacks markers for identification). Others have invoked the ‘rule of three,’ though such rules are not absolute (some stories employ the ‘rule of two,’ and others the ‘rule of four’), so that basing identification on this formal quality is dicey. In the end, this parable was simplified to its minimal structure, and in doing so the author omitted the usual markers for identification, so that a variety of cases may be made. The only other guideline is that the meaning created must fit into the general meanings developed in Luke.

33 Some make excuses for the priest/Levite, suggesting that the man looked dead, so that they were afraid of incurring corpse-impurity. But the word ‘half-dead’ does not mean ‘looked dead;’ cf. its use in 4Mac. 4:11, where the half-dead man stretches out his arms to pray to God. Similarly, Bruce Longenecker, “The Story of the Samaritan and the Innkeeper (Luke 10:30–35): A Study in Character Rehabilitation,” *Biblical Interpretation* 17, no. 4 (2009): 438 fn. 29, accessed Sept. 1, 2017, Humanities International Complete, EBSCOhost. As John Nolland notes: “The story’s focus is on the priest’s failure to help rather than on the reason that he failed to help” (*Luke 9:21–18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary 35b [Dallas: Word Books, 1993], 593).

wrong with us!' At this level, story-meaning is consequential, as it deals with central issues in human existence, such as the value of the other, the damage caused by tribalism, and the ethics of ignoring one in need. Indeed, this story broaches the central issue of how one values the outsider, the marginalized, and even one's enemies.

Finally, some story-meanings require a much deeper level of abstraction before the relevance becomes clear. Here the text is about issues that are of no consequence to the target audience. For example, the story-meaning of the Healing on the Sabbath (Mk. 3:1-5) would include, 'Jesus evaluates healing as an appropriate action on the Sabbath.' Readers initially abstract this to 'Jesus evaluates healing as acceptable behavior during sacred time.' While this is meaningful to readers, it is of little consequence in our culture where healing is routinely performed during sacred time.

Here, some might attempt to create relevance by reducing this meaning to an associated area, such as legalistic behavior. But this misses the centrally meaningful elements, and so breaks with the value of loyalty. Instead, our readers abstract the elements further, in order to reach the goal of common categories that are relevant. In the present example, readers abstract sacred time to 'time that God has set apart for rest and worship,' and healing to 'meeting a genuine human need.' Now the relevance is apparent: 'Western civilization has erred in turning time designed for rest and worship into opportunities for making money, so that the exception of helping those in need is reduced to helping ourselves get ahead.'

Once story-meaning is translated into common categories, and rendered both meaningful and consequential, it often exists in fairly general categories. From this position, the actual-self can take the notion of relevance one step further, by re-enculturating story-meaning. This process attempts to restore the specifics that were lost in the abstracting process. So 'Samaritan,' which was abstracted to despised outsider, may now be coded in modern cultural systems of marginalization and oppression. Concretely, it may be translated as a member of some despised outgroup in present culture, by virtue of race, class, gender, or religion.

5 Evaluating Validity: the Effects of Moderate Realism

After story-meaning is formed and translated, the actual-self evaluates the validity of that meaning for the real world. Here we return to the interaction between the reading-self and the actual-self. The reading-self experiences the event, and abstracts meaning bits to themes and story-meaning. At this

level, the reading-self uses language descriptively, to depict the world he or she experienced. For the reading-self, story-meaning is an accurate description of storyworld experiences. But the actual-self evaluates the storyworld as a non-actualized extension of the world. More importantly, the actual-self recognizes that this world was created by someone else and may have no bearing on the reader's actual world or any actual world. Hence, the actual-self does not necessarily believe that story-meaning is true, but only that the implied author believes that it is true.

This discussion allows us to engage Ernst-August Gutt's terminology, where language is divided into descriptive and interpretive uses. The descriptive use conveys an account of the world (e.g., 'It is raining,' or 'Jesus is the authoritative interpreter'), while the interpretive use conveys someone else's understanding of that world (e.g., 'Jayden says that it is raining,' or 'The implied author believes that Jesus is the authoritative interpreter').³⁴ When the reading-self formulates story-meaning, under the stance of modal realism, he or she uses language descriptively. In the *Storm at Sea*, the reading-self experiences the demonic wind, fears for his or her own life, and is awed at the demon's obedience to Jesus. From this, the reading-self creates story-meaning as a first-person experience of the simulation: 'Jesus has authority over wind-spirits, and I need not fear them any longer.' But the actual-self recognizes that the storyworld was created by someone else, and so is always someone else's meaning. The actual-self restates story-meaning to reflect this: 'The author believes that Jesus has authority over wind-spirits, and so believes that I need not fear them any longer.' This is the interpretive use of language.

On the one hand, the reading-self uses *descriptive language* to make assertions about the storyworld. These descriptive assertions are guaranteed by the reading-self's capacity to experience the simulation. The reading-self remains unaware of the author's hand behind the simulation, and so assumes that the meaning is from his or her own experiences in a temporary actual world (modal realism). On the other hand, the actual-self uses *interpretive language* to make assertions about the communication of others. These interpretive assertions are guaranteed by the actual-self's capacity to grasp the simulation as someone else's work. Here the actual-self recognizes that the simulation was shaped by the author in a temporary possible world (moderate realism), where the

34 Díaz-Pérez summarizes: "On the one hand, language is used descriptively when a given utterance is intended to be taken as true of a state of affairs in some possible world. On the other hand, when an utterance is intended to represent what someone said or thought, language is being used interpretively" ("Relevance Theory and Translation," 110).

reading-self's experiences were contrived by that author. In short, the actual-self acknowledges that story-meaning is always someone else's meaning, and one's evaluative labels determine validity-for-self.

From this discussion, we conclude that the actual-self's evaluation of validity-for-self is not based on the quality of the narrative experience, for that is the realm of the reading-self where all experiences seem real. Validity is an evaluation from outside of the simulation, where the actual-self uses his or her own criteria to create the labels of fiction/nonfiction, secular/sacred, valid/irrelevant and the like. The actual-self even decides how the label of 'sacred text' applies to issues of validity. Indeed, the actual-self may evaluate a fictional novel as sufficiently human to be valid for modern existence, but evaluate a nonfictional history as so lacking in human connections as to be irrelevant.

This conclusion is especially significant for New Testament narratives. Earlier, we examined how these stories seem lacking in interest and engagement because of different narrative techniques and reader tastes (Chapter 4). First-century narratives emphasize plot at the expense of character, and so lack the extended inside views and character development that Western readers prefer. But the actual-self may still evaluate these less engaging narratives as more valid than emotionally intense ones. In the end, all story-meaning is someone else's meaning, and one's evaluative labels determine validity-for-self.

While these conclusions about validity are generally correct, there are exceptions, and these exceptions are essential to understanding how uncritical assimilation occurs. The assimilation of meaning may be an active or passive process. Active assimilation occurs when the actual-self concludes, as a conscious choice, that story-meaning is valid for one's present existence. Passive assimilation occurs when the actual-self accepts story-meaning automatically, without thinking, as if that meaning were intuitively valid. The former allows for critique prior to the acceptance of meaning, while the latter accepts meaning without the possibility of critique.

Passive assimilation is the central mode of uptake in most propaganda and advertising, but even applies to narratives that simply reproduce culture.³⁵ It occurs when the actual-self's evaluation of the storyworld *as someone else's meaning or as a non-actualized world are compromised*. In the former, the mean-

35 Martha Nussbaum concludes: "I claim that all citizens need to ponder the issues to which these novelists direct us, since all live in a society in which circumstances of birth, social class, race, gender, and sexuality construct people's life chances as unequal in a pervasive way" ("Exactly and Responsibly: A Defense of Ethical Criticism," *Philosophy and Literature* 22, no. 2 [1998]: 361).

ings are grasped as the reading-self's meanings instead of the implied author's meanings, so that the actual-self is predisposed to accept these meanings as valid. In the latter, the storyworld appears so real, and the reading-self's experiences so realistic, that the actual-self evaluates these meanings as part of the actual world. Before addressing how the actual-self resists passive assimilation, we need to develop a deeper understanding of how narratives achieve these effects. After all, the actual-self would never automatically accept the meanings developed in the propositional language of a lecture.

Narratives generally present the storyworld as a possible world, which is made realistic by its mimetic use of actual world settings, characters, actions, emotions, and frameworks. For the reading-self, this is the normal state of affairs. The problem arises when the actual-self finds the storyworld so realistic that he or she mistakes it for the actual world. To put this in our terminology, the actual-self mistakenly grants it the status of a temporary actual world instead of a temporary possible world, and so uses descriptive language ('x is y') instead of interpretive language ('the implied author believes that x is y').

This is especially problematic at the level of ideology, as the ideological shape of the storyworld is confirmed and validated by the events in the storyworld. An author with an androcentric worldview will create a storyworld that reproduces an androcentric worldview, and this extends to the symbolic universe in which all storyworld elements are located. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the events reflect that worldview, almost as if they could not occur in any other way. God is presented as male without explanation, because in an androcentric worldview it needs no explanation. The concern is that such pervasive ideologies leave a residue in readers, subtly reshaping their understanding of the world. As Gregory writes: "No matter how slightly, we will have become someone different from who we were before because we will have enlarged our capacity for thinking some thoughts we would not have thought in just this way."³⁶

This problem is exacerbated by the process of entering the storyworld, as the reading-self is overwritten with the worldview of a foreign culture that may be androcentric in nature. The problem is exacerbated yet further by the investment aspect of identification, as readers assign their way of being to a character

36 Marshall Gregory, "Redefining Ethical Criticism," *Journal of Literary Theory* 4, no. 2 (Dec. 2010): 294, accessed May 30, 2014, Humanities International Compete, EBSCOhost. Ethical criticism is based on a "strong connection between art and life," as art provides "surrogate experiences" for the reader (Daniel Schwarz, "A Humanistic Ethics of Reading," in *Mapping the Ethical Turn*, ed. Todd Davis and Kenneth Womack [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001], 5).

at the intimate levels of thinking and emotions. As Lennard Davis writes: "By the connection through identification, ideologies can ebb and flow through a populace."³⁷ Indeed, this concern is as old as Plato:

According to Plato, when we identify with a literary character, we abandon our internal integrity and take on the ideas and feelings of others. In the act of identification, we 'assimilate' ourselves to another person ... The act of sympathy, in short, threatens the very integrity of the individual: when we enter into the lives of literary characters, we incorporate many different ways of thinking and speaking into our psyches.³⁸

Furthermore, narratives present events through multiple languages, some of which humans have difficulty evaluating. While people are adept at evaluating propositional language, they are often ill-equipped at evaluating kinesthetic and emotional languages. A person will often check a linguistic statement for sincerity, and compare it to their prior learning for truth value. But people rarely do this at a display of emotions, even though actors and musicians routinely project emotions that they do not feel. As Jenefer Robinson notes: "We cannot infer from the melancholy character of the music to any melancholy in the artist. The music is a 'melancholy expression,' not an 'expression of melancholy.'"³⁹ Because of the tendency to assign authenticity and sincerity to emotional messages, these are often passively assimilated. Indeed, when all of these languages align, so as to mutually validate a central meaning, they can produce a message that transcends rational discussion. Such occurs in cigarette commercials, where the rational use of linguistic language asserts that smoking is hazardous to one's health, and yet the conjunction of kinesthetic and emotional languages causes the propositional message to be ignored.

37 Lennard Davis, *Resisting Novels* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 127–128. Judith Gardiner writes: "All sides in this debate, including conservatives, feminists, humanists, and anti-humanists, collaborate in assigning great importance to literature as it internally reproduces—and so causes people to accept—the institutional arrangements and hierarchies that constitute things as they are under Western capitalism" ("Empathic Ways of Reading: Narcissism, Cultural Politics, and Russ's 'Female Man,'" *Feminist Studies* 20, no. 1 [Spring 1994]: 96).

38 Andrea Nightingale, "Mimesis: Ancient Greek Literary Theory," in *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. Patricia Waugh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 42–43.

39 Jenefer Robinson, "The Emotions in Art," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 180.

So, how do readers protect themselves from uncritical assimilation? To begin, all storyworlds are ideologically tainted, as authors always—at least in part—reproduce their existing culture. There is no escaping ideology, only deciding how one deals with it. Let us examine three possible paths. The most radical path is to avoid texts from other ideological stances, so that readers never encounter someone else's ideological meanings. If texts create serious meaning and reshape readers, then, for example, it might be best for women to avoid male-written texts, as such texts are “essentially male mythology.”⁴⁰ In this way readers never risk being ideologically reshaped by the narrative's experiences or by identification with its male characters.

When this process is taken to its natural end, it creates other problems. To begin, learning only occurs when a person encounters ideas or thoughts that are other with respect to him or herself. Such an encounter always constitutes a risk to the self, namely, that such otherness might be passively and uncritically assimilated. Indeed, every encounter with another person is a confrontation with otherness. As Ricoeur notes: “It is a fact that the other, because other, comes to be perceived as a danger for one's own identity.”⁴¹ Hence, this solution requires that readers initially interrogate each text across the many sociological, political, and ideological categories prior to any engagement, in order to find those identical to the self. The end of this path leads to the twin problems of little genuine learning and few texts suitable for engagement. As Kathleen Lundeen concludes:

Moreover, since everyone is marked by society in a number of ways (through, for instance, ethnicity, class, sex, religion, age, physical mobility, and nationality), if we were to insist on shared identity in all areas, writers would only be fit to represent themselves, and readers, to understand representations of themselves. By this logic, autobiography would emerge as the sole legitimate creative genre and it would be suitable only for a readership of one: its author.⁴²

40 Danna Fewell, commenting on P. Milne, “Reading the Bible Ideologically: Feminist Criticism,” in *To Each Its Own Meaning*, rev. ed., ed. Stephen McKenzie and Steven Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 274.

41 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 81.

42 Kathleen Lundeen, “Who Has the Right to Feel? The Ethics of Literary Empathy,” in *Style* 32.2 (Summer 1998): 261. Cf. John Maynard: “Norms for reading—say the norm of the woman reader—seem always to break up, when interrogated sufficiently, into subcategories—hetero-women readers, lesbian readers—and these in turn break into smaller units—middle-class lesbian women, African-American hetero-women readers,

A less radical path is to engage texts with a suspicion of ideology, followed by resistance to the same. In this solution, readers recognize that certain ideologies risk reshaping the self in damaging ways, and so do not take the chance of experiencing these. A symbolic universe built on racism, colonialism, classism, or misogyny is damaging to all readers, though especially to members of these outgroups. These ideologies are inscribed in language as 'normal,' as if such views and institutions were part of reality, resulting in a kind of unconscious hegemony. As Habermas notes, language "does not, properly speaking, make the speaker aware of unconscious presuppositions."⁴³ Hence, these readers begin with a hermeneutic of suspicion, where they identify the ideologies that they consider most important, and from the beginning—from the first word of the text—suspect that the narrative's events have been shaped by these ideologies. Upon recognizing such elements, readers resist by reading against the grain of the text, so that these ideologies are never constructed or experienced in the first place. This keeps women readers, for example, from being "immasculated by the very reading process."⁴⁴

When this path is taken, it creates two central problems. First, such readers are not primarily interested in hearing the author's voice, but in recognizing and resisting specific ideologies. This shifts the way reading occurs, as these readers begin with a different desire and method—one whose steps are designed to reveal and resist specific ideological commitments. Such readings are not a response to the author's voice, for this approach precludes the construction of different voices. Adam Newton points out our concern: "Ethically poised philosophy probably serves literature best ... when it allows texts first to speak, to tell their whole stories, before it responds."⁴⁵

Second, this path creates a paradox: how do readers resist the text's ideology when, from the beginning of reading, they used a resistant reading that shaped the narrative with their own ideological commitments? Rabinowitz gets at this when he writes: "Judith Fetterley's 'resisting reader' can come into being only

and on and on" (*Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers* [Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009], 362).

43 Jürgen Habermas, "On Hermeneutics' Claim to Universality," In *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 298.

44 Pamela Thimmes, "What Makes a Feminist Reading Feminist," in *Escaping Eden*, ed. Harold Washington, Susan Graham, and Pamela Thimmes (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 136. Also Janice Anderson: "When a woman reads an androcentric/patriarchal/kyriarchal text she is immasculated, that is, she reads and identifies as male ... She constructs herself as 'Other'" (Janice Anderson, "Feminist Criticism," in *Mark & Method*, 2nd ed., ed. Janice Anderson and Stephen Moore [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008], 119).

45 Adam Newton, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 68.

if there is something to resist.”⁴⁶ It is for this reason that our readers begin with an initial reading that follows the text, so that they have something to resist. For our model readers, the second reading is the place to apply suspicion and resistance. Here the reading-self constructs a multitude of voices—the author’s voice as well as voices of critique—so that the actual-self never passively accepts the reading-self’s meaning.

Another less radical solution is for readers to refuse to participate in the narrative’s events, so that the storyworld is never confused with the actual world. By privileging distance over participation, detachment over identification, and aloofness over emotional attachment, readers never develop investment in the characters.⁴⁷ Without this closeness, readers do not participate in the events, but watch the events from the edge of the storyworld, much as occurs in journalistic reporting. Such readers have no emotional involvement with characters, so that the events seem less real, and readers never mistake the storyworld for the actual world. The payoff is that readers are less affected by attachment and investment, and so are better able to identify the ideology that pervades the interactions.

When this path is taken, it creates other problems. Centrally, the emotional and kinesthetic languages, as well as the expectations created by identification, are integral aspects of creating meaning. As Robinson summarizes: “Very often, important facts about the characters and events depicted in a novel or painting are made manifest to us through our emotional responses to them.”⁴⁸ In the Parable of the Day Laborers (Mt. 20:1–16), it is precisely the resentment over being treated unfairly that gives the parable its sharp meaning. Similarly, with the anger and fear over all the loss in the Parable of the Sower (Lk. 8:4–8), and the horror over increasingly deplorable actions in the Parable of the Vineyard (Mt. 21:33–40). Indeed, without identification, readers miss their own blindness in the Woman with a Hemorrhage (Mk. 5:25–34) and their shock over the call of a tax-collector (Mk. 2:14).

The effects of identification and the emotional language are an integral part of a narrative’s meaning, so that ignoring these represents a manipulation of the author’s voice. James Phelan puts it nicely:

46 Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 86.

47 Gardiner characterizes the reading position of Toril Moi and Catherine Belsey as follows: “These critics argue for reading methods that privilege distance over identification with literary characters” (“Empathic Ways of Reading,” 90). Cf. Wayne Booth’s inciteful discussion, which begins: “Sophisticated readers, we are told, should never identify in this way” (*The Company We Keep* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988], 255).

48 Robinson, “The Emotions in Art,” 186.

This rhetorical act involves a multi-leveled communication from author to audience, one that involves the audience's intellect, emotions, psyche, and values. Furthermore, these levels interact with each other. Our values and those set forth by the implied author affect our judgments of characters, our judgments affect our emotions, and the trajectory of our feelings is linked to the psychological and thematic effects of the narrative.⁴⁹

Because of the problems associated with these various approaches, we pose a different solution to the problem of passive assimilation. This path specifically addresses the two central issues, namely, that readers *recognize the storyworld as a non-actual world*, and *evaluate story-meaning as someone else's meaning*. We suggest the following four steps. First, readers need to engage in self-development prior to reading. A young child has little development in the area of gender identity, so that an androcentric novel will tend to be passively assimilated—the child simply assumes this is normative. Once self-development in this area has occurred, the young adult comes to the novel with existing ideas about gender relations, values, and self. In this situation, the reading-self still develops story-meaning that includes an androcentric worldview, but the actual-self recognizes this as someone else's meaning as rooted in someone else's worldview, and that it is at odds with his or her own worldview. Without self-development, readers tend to passively accept narrative meaning.

The second step is to recognize when something foreign is encountered.⁵⁰ When reading the story about the moon causing epilepsy (*selēniazomai*, Mt. 17:15), the actual-self knows that such does not occur. But the reading-self accepts the storyworld's use of the moon. Indeed, under the stance of modal realism, the reading-self is convinced that the moon has magical powers, and that this is the normal state of affairs in the storyworld. When reading in this way, then, how can the recognition of 'something foreign' occur?

To begin, the reading-self is created as a projection of the actual-self. When this reading-self encounters a new belief, it does not fit with the reading-self's underlying symbolic universe, so creating a disjunction. At this point reading stops, the attentional focus shifts to the actual-self who is outside of the simulation, and the actual-self attempts to resolve this disjunction. Normally, these

49 James Phelan, "Sethe's Choice: 'Beloved' and the Ethics of Reading," in *Mapping the Ethical Turn*, ed. Todd Davis and Kenneth Womack (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 93. Cf. Newton's notion of "live entering" (*Narrative Ethics*, 85–86).

50 This is the basis for conscientization (consciousness raising), self-reflection (Habermas), and ideological suspicion (socio-critical methods), where underlying ideologies are brought to recognition, and can then be evaluated.

disjunctions are resolved in a nearly automatic fashion, and readers again find themselves in the simulation. But readers can learn to become aware of these junctures, where they have stopped the simulation. Instead of automatically returning to the simulation, they can learn to interrupt the process, and spend time not just resolving the disjunction, but evaluating the issues that caused it. By stopping the automaticity, readers can become consciously involved.

This is the case for all types of disjunctions. Cross-cultural and radical intracultural disjunctions are relatively easy to recognize, as the events are so new that the reading-self's symbolic universe cannot account for them. When Jesus asserts: "Your sins are forgiven" (Lk. 5:26, perfect tense), or states that the son of man is "lord even of the Sabbath" (Mk. 2:28), the first-century readers' convictions cannot account for either, and reading stops until the actual-self can sort through the issues. Moderate intracultural disjunctions are somewhat different, as the newness is still part of one's existing culture. But the simulation is still stopped as the actual-self attempts to find the appropriate structure—such as the malapropism in Shakespeare's: "Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this."⁵¹ One additional note, on moderate intracultural disjunctions, is that they also occur when the storyworld is based on a symbolic universe that is in the common culture, but which the actual-self explicitly rejects. For example, different groups in the same culture may have different evaluations of women, ethnic minorities, or religions. In such situations, the author and reader may employ different symbolic universes from the same general culture, resulting in a moderate intracultural disjunction. The reader's recognition of this is most clearly seen when the alternate symbolic universe is so repugnant—say, in a story embodying overt racism—that the actual-self puts the book down.

In this step, the goal is for readers to recognize when disjunctions occur, and at this point to stop and evaluate the reasons. This underlines the importance of having a well-developed self, so that contrary ideologies, beliefs, and ethics produce disjunctions. This step specifically targets the tendency to assume that the storyworld is a real world, for disjunctions are based on violations of the actual-self's world. It is someone else's simulation in someone else's culture. Such is the case when a modern reader engages the New Testament, as the ancient culture had an androcentric bias, accepted the institution of slavery, believed in cultural superiority, and considered sickness to be one's own fault (Jn. 9:2, Sir. 38:9–10).

⁵¹ William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act IV, scene 2.

The third step is to develop evaluative processes for each of the multiple languages. As already noted, humans are skilled at evaluating linguistic and propositional meanings, but are less skilled with evaluating experienced meanings, and even less so when dealing with emotional and kinesthetic languages. For this reason, other languages often fail to create disjunctions, and so tend to be passively assimilated.

But these other languages are easy to recognize when overt deception occurs, as where Judas kisses Jesus. This suggests that readers can develop skill in 'reading' these other languages. Indeed, these skills are necessary when dealing with advertising and propaganda, as these modes of communication often rely on other languages. Readers can learn to recognize the archetypal language of Hitler 'coming down out of the clouds like a god' in his propaganda piece *Triumph of the Will*, and the emotional languages used in advertising various products. In the New Testament, readers recognize the kinesthetic meanings of "crossing by on the other side of the road" (Lk. 10:30) and "sitting on the right and left hand" (Mk. 10:37), as well as the emotional meanings of "do you not care that we are perishing" (Mk. 4:38) and "they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead" (Lk. 8:53). When these other languages are understood, the events can create intracultural disjunctions, and the meanings evaluated.

The final step is for readers to engage in second readings of the text. These readings originate in methods that are designed—at least in part—to reveal, resist, and critique ideology, such as feminist, African-American, liberation, post-colonial, gender, and womanist criticisms. In other words, we are promoting a staged reading of narratives, where the first reading allows the author to have his or her voice, and second readings turn to critique that voice. To put this in the language of intentionality, second readings originate in the desire to reveal, resist, and critique ideology, and this desire selects specific methods that are designed to do just that. Furthermore, these other voices need not be restricted to critique. Readers may produce second readings that originate in desires for theology, historical facts, aesthetic pleasure, vicarious experiences, or spiritual development—to name only a few.

Each second reading creates another voice, and these voices are brought together at the self's discussion table. The goal of this discussion is not simply to present diverse voices, but to put these voices in conversation under the goal of coming to consensus on specific issues, such as ideology, theology, and validity. Indeed, the highest form of interpretation occurs at this grand gathering of the many, where all voices are valued in the production of meaningful conversations. While this requires work on the part of the reader, the payoff is a safe, vibrant, and healthy encounter with the other, resulting in an expansion in the boundaries of selfhood. As I have written elsewhere:

The reader is given, over and over again, the unique opportunity of experiencing worlds that are underlain by foreign assumptions, and of engaging in robust conversations with the many voices of critique, expansion, and enrichment. Conflict will emerge in such conversations, as each method is underlain by different assumptions about the world ... These conflicts should not be glossed over, for just here the reader is offered another unique opportunity, namely to reexamine his/her own assumptions.⁵²

6 Summary

We began this chapter by showing the need for translation. Story-meaning is designed for the culture of the intended audience, and though authors may expect its meaning to be valid for other cultures, it was not designed for any other worldview. When the reading-self is overwritten with the culture of the intended audience, he or she constructs and experiences the simulation as the author expected, and so produces story-meaning within the source culture. Translation begins when the actual-self desires to hear that same story-meaning in modern culture. The goal is to translate story-meaning so that it functions for the actual-self in modern culture, as it did for the reading-self in the source culture.

This view of translation is tied to our ethical stance, where the primary value is loyalty to the experienced meaning, that is, to the author's voice. In this way, story-meaning is not domesticated by modern culture or shaped to fit the readers' ethics and ideology. The central goals for the translation process are equivalence and relevance. Equivalence orients readers to cross-cultural differences. Readers initially locate story-meaning in the source culture's worldview, where the centrally meaningful elements are identified, simplified, and abstracted, so that functionally similar properties can be described for the target culture. Relevance orients the translator to issues of consequence, so that story-meaning has a similar existential currency for modern readers as it had for the intended audience.

The actual-self begins the translation process by understanding how the reading-self came to his or her meanings. The actual-self creates an account of how the reading-self was shaped by the events, in order to grasp the relation of story-meaning to narrative experience. Next the actual-self identifies the

52 Eric Douglass, *Reading the Bible Ethically: Recovering the Voice in the Text* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 275.

centrally meaningful elements, and abstracts these to more elemental shapes. Abstracting is complete when the categories of meaning for a term in the source culture, match the categories of meaning in the target culture. At this point the conditions for communication are met, as the language elements are held in common. Finally, the actual-self checks on the translation by looping the translated meaning back to the reading-self's experience of the text, to ensure functional similarity.

Once story-meaning is translated into simple descriptive sentences, modern readers may re-enculturate this meaning. Here readers, still employing the values of loyalty, equivalence, and relevance, return story-meaning to experienced meaning. Readers begin with the highest emergent properties, asking what genre can encode with functional similarity, how the emotional and kinesthetic languages are manifested, and how categories of sacred space, identity, and pollution are grasped in modern culture. While complete equivalence can never occur, functional similarity is a reasonable goal.

Translation, however, is not the final step in interpretation. The final step involves the actual-self's capacity to evaluate the validity of story-meaning. Without evaluation, story-meaning tends to be passively and uncritically assimilated by readers, opening the possibility of self-deformation—as happens with propaganda. To this end, the actual-self evaluates the simulation by employing moderate realism, so that the simulation is understood as a non-actualized world, and story-meaning as someone else's meaning. The actual-self employs the interpretive use of language, so that meaning is always 'the implied author believes this.'

Nevertheless, the actual-self's evaluations may become compromised when simulations are highly emotional and realistic, and so are grasped as a temporary actual world instead of a temporary possible world. Readers counter this with the following four-step process. First, readers engage in self-development in the many ideological areas. Without this, the storyworld's presentation risks being accepted as normal. Second, readers learn to recognize when foreign meanings are encountered. For ideological issues, these are the places where disjunctions arise at the level of worldview. Third, readers learn to evaluate each of the multiple languages, so that these meanings are not passively assimilated. Finally, readers employ second readings of the text, with methods that are designed to reveal various ideological viewpoints. The voices from each are set in a larger conversation over issues of validity and ideology.

Markan Examples

In this chapter, we turn to examine a variety of Markan texts, employing the method developed in earlier chapters. Let us begin with a quick review of the method itself. The first step is locating the text, that is, selecting the cultural perspective that determines the usage and function of the text's elements. Locating the text begins with the identification of the intended audience, and the characterization of that culture. The reading-self is overwritten with that culture's symbolic universe and social institutions, wholly accepting these in their production of the simulation. This is the ideal reader in our communication model.

The next step is entering the narrative. In ancient texts, this normally involves identifying with a character, based on a variety of narrative techniques that are deployed in a specific strategy. Once identification has occurred, readers have uptake of the events through this character's perspective. Put another way, readers assign their way of being in the storyworld to this character. Identification is characterized by the processes of attachment, investment, and commitment. Attachment describes how the events are understood with this character's worldview, and are evaluated with respect to this character's interests and goals. Investment emphasizes that the events are textured by this character's emotions and thinking. Commitment means that readers stay with this character, evaluating events from this character's perspective even when he or she is absent. Readers do not ignore other characters, for they are often developed with roundness and complexity in order to produce depth of conflict. Minor characters may even function as foils to the disciples, revealing aspects of true discipleship. Identification only means that readers do not develop commitment with other characters, that is, they do not assign their way of being in the storyworld to them.

Readers evaluate the actions, goals, and attitudes of all characters from two larger structures, identified as the interest bias and evaluative standard. The former stresses that readers have adopted the goals of the character of identification, and so judge all actions as furthering or impeding those goals. When a minor character works against the character of identification, his or her actions are graded as unwelcome and undesirable, no matter how virtuous those actions might be. The evaluative standard is the overarching standard of judgment by which readers weigh the moral rightness of all actions, attitudes, and beliefs. In the Gospels, this is generally located in the narrator's evaluative

comments, which either validate certain positions or validate Jesus as having the correct position. The interest bias and evaluative standard may come into conflict, creating situations where readers wish for the fulfillment of the disciples' goals, but evaluate the rightness of those goals through Jesus' comments.

Along with entering the narrative, readers also experience the events. Events are the basic building blocks of narrative, where meaning is experienced through participation. Readers abstract meaning bits from the events, and synthesize these into themes. Narratives often set themes into conflict, as in the Markan conflict between the inclusivity of Jesus and the exclusivity of the disciples. These are usually resolved through the narrator's comments, the evaluative standard, and the values of the implied author. Readers encounter disjunctions when characters act or events unfold in unexpected ways. At such points, reading stops and the attentional focus moves to the actual-self, who generally resolves these within the language system. Radical intracultural disjunctions are of particular importance, as these are places where the author's subjectivity crosses cultural boundaries in bringing something new into language. The resolution of conflicts generally settle the intra-narrative tensions, and result in the construction of story-meaning.

Story-meaning was designed for the intended audience, and not—in its initial form—for any other audience. Authors usually expect their meanings to be applicable to later audiences, but without knowing how a culture will shift, cannot expect to achieve this goal. Hence arises the need for translation. Translation is tied to our ethical stance, and so privileges the value of loyalty to the author's voice. This keeps readers from domesticating story-meaning, by forcing it into the readers' ideological commitments. The goals of translation include creating equivalence and relevance. The former orients readers to functional similarity, by abstracting story-meaning to the point where the categories of meaning in the source culture match the categories of meaning in the target culture. The latter orients readers to deep existential issues, so that story-meaning remains of consequence in the target culture.

Once story-meaning has been translated, it may be critiqued. Critique is essential, as story-meaning is always someone else's meaning. The actual-self, from his or her stance of moderate realism, evaluates its validity for the actual-self's existence: it is a temporary possible world where the implied author accepts and conveys certain truths. This is where readers apply labels, such as sacred text, resulting in a special sense of authority for that meaning. This is also the place for critique by engaging in second readings of the text, resulting in larger discussions over story-meaning.

In the following sections, we will apply this method to specific pericopae. Full justice cannot be done to any of these, as the point is not to resolve the dif-

ficulties of social life, grammatical constructions, intertextuality, and history, but to show the design of this approach. Each example will cover the major steps, as well as emphasize a specific aspect of the process, as noted in its introduction. When our comments engage a technical facet of the process, such as the interest bias or cognitive empathy, this feature will be identified in the footnotes. These examples will not explore the use of second readings, as these are not part of the method at hand, but of our larger reading design. Finally, when addressing how readers experience narrative events, we will switch to first-person pronouns, so that our grammar will change from how 'readers locate and enter' events to how 'we experience' them. This shift in voice is an attempt to mirror how readers participate in the unfolding events, so that the 'we' is the reading-self is association with the character of identification,

1 The Call of Levi (Mk. 2:14)

We begin with a short text, so that we may emphasize the complicated elements of translation. The text reads: "As he (Jesus) was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him." The usual practice is to identify this as a call story, and to note that it was unusual for a rabbi to call students.¹ Most commentaries proceed with a social description of toll-collectors, noting how they fit into the Roman tax system and so were evaluated as complicit with the oppressor, as well as how they were known for dishonesty to fellow Jews. For these reasons, toll-collectors were disliked and the profession considered dishonorable. These notes address the location of the text, placing its elements in the culture of the intended audience.

The next step is to enter the text, in this case through the group character of the disciples.² When the readers hear about Levi at his tax booth, they immediately grasp Levi from the disciples' perspective, even though the disciples are not mentioned.³ We view him as dishonest with our people and complicit with our oppressors, and so as working against our interests.⁴ Hence, we view Levi

1 R.T. France states: "Rabbis did not call their followers; rather, the pupil adopted the teacher" (*The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 96), though he lists other common practices.

2 The character of identification.

3 Commitment aspect of identification.

4 Disciples' conceptual point of view and interest point of view.

with disgust, and do not want him anywhere near our group.⁵ Association with such a man can only bring disrepute and shame to our small band.⁶ Indeed, we hope that Jesus will ignore the man.⁷ Instead, Jesus shocks us by issuing an invitation to Levi, to become one of us!

This creates a disjunction in the experience of the text, causing readers to stop reading and try to reason this action out. As Jesus has not yet associated with dishonorable people, this comes as something new. Jesus has violated various cultural expectations, such as touching a leper (1:41), but the inclusion of a toll-collector impacts upon the identity of our group and how our culture views us.⁸ Indeed, this point is emphasized in the next verse, where we are forced to eat with sinners in an outright showing of social solidarity with the most disreputable people.⁹ In short, by including this person in our group, we share in the toll-collector's shame, which contaminates us all.¹⁰

The calling of Levi creates a radical intracultural disjunction, where Jesus has deliberately violated cultural expectations. The actual-self addresses this by creating an account of the reading-self's experiences, following the path of the reading-self, as outlined above. This calling, in the storyworld, comes as a rebuke to us-as-disciples: we did not want Levi in our group. As the evaluative standard lies with Jesus, we evaluate our interests as the problem, and our division of people into the categories of ingroup vs. outgroup, and worthy vs. unworthy, as a violation of that standard.¹¹ This suggests that the event is less about the call of Levi as a historical issue, and more about Jesus' entrance requirements into our group. For us, it is a revelation of how we got the requirements wrong, and how we misunderstood Levi's value and identity.

5 Indirect emotional empathy.

6 Interest point of view, interest bias. The disciples desire to be a respectable movement within that culture (honor-shame).

7 Indirect cognitive empathy. Cf. Jerome Neyrey's "map of people to be avoided or shunned" ("The Idea of Purity in Mark's Gospel," *Semeia* 35 [1986]: 108, accessed Feb. 10, 2014, ATLASerials, Religion Database, EBSCOhost).

8 Collective notion of identity; cf. Chapter 4, fn. 45–46 and text.

9 Disciples' conceptual point of view and interest bias. Mark Powell adds: "Thus, the substance of the tradition is not just that Jesus ate with people whom sectarian Pharisees regarded as outsiders, but that he ate with people whom he himself regarded as sinners and with people whom most people of his day would have considered to be inappropriate table companions" ("Was Jesus a Friend of Unrepentant Sinners? A Fresh Appraisal of Sanders's Controversial Proposal," *Journal for the Study of The Historical Jesus* 7, no. 3 [2009]: 299, accessed Aug. 2, 2017, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost).

10 Indirect cognitive empathy, indirect emotional empathy. Neyrey writes: "In line with this, it matters who eats with whom; holy people eat holy food together, but an unclean person at such a table is unclean and polluting" (Neyrey, "The Idea of Purity," 104).

11 This is an interaction between the interest bias and the evaluative standard.

After resolving this disjunction, the attentional focus shifts back to the reading-self, with new concerns about the nature of 'our group.'

Next, readers construct story-meaning. For the reading-self, the new understanding is that Jesus calls even a toll-collector, despite our desire to exclude him. Furthermore, Jesus expects us to include him as part of our community, as if he had value for our band, even to the point of eating with him and sharing our identity with him. Story-meaning is then abstracted to more elemental categories for theme formation. Here toll-collector is abstracted to 'person of low social status,' and so picks up events about other marginalized humans, such as lepers, demoniacs, Gentile soldiers, hemorrhaging women, and Samaritans. Centrally, this includes the demoniac called Legion (5:1–20), who is commanded to 'go and tell,' in a commissioning story not unlike that of the disciples (e.g., 3:13). Hence, one central theme is that Jesus' mission is characterized by inclusivity: he helps, calls, and commissions those of low social and religious status, and does this against the norms of out-group exclusion that characterize our culture.

Finally, readers translate this story-meaning into the target culture. Readers begin by reducing the many elements of this event to simple sentences. The point is to disentangle the many aspects of this event, so that each element can be addressed. Next these elements are abstracted to the point of common categories, so that cross-cultural communication can occur. Finally, each translated element is looped back to the original experience to ensure similarity of function. As the present example is compact, we can address each of these aspects.

The central elements for this text include: the toll-collector, the disciples' emotions and thinking, the social identity of the group, the type of speech act (including implicature), and the notions of call story, history, and nonfiction. These are abstracted as follows: (1) The source culture's categories for 'toll-collector' do not match those of the target culture: each understands the term differently. The source culture includes notions of dishonesty with one's own people, complicity with the enemy, and low social status. The modern term does not encode these meanings. Hence, readers abstract the term to a more general shape, such as 'one with whom I am embarrassed to associate, due to their low social and moral status.' These notions, of embarrassment and status, occur in both cultures, and so create a functionally similar meaning for the target culture. (2) The emotion of disgust is common to both cultures and needs no translating. (3) The desire to avoid this person, is also in common categories. (4) The notion of social identity is different and needs translating.¹² The

12 On 'social identity,' cf. Chapter 4, fn. 45–46 and text.

ancient culture used group identities to define one's status, place in society, and roles. While modern culture has a general notion of collective identities, as occurs in nationalism, it is a rather weak concept. This would need strengthening, perhaps using the stronger association suggested by 'our team' or 'our family.' Furthermore, each person's actions contributed to the group's identity, especially at the level of honor and shame, so that the shame attached to a toll-collector also contaminated the larger group. Hence, the identity issue may be translated as 'accepting a dishonorable outsider into our family, with the shame that this brings upon us.' (5) The event is presented as history, only history in the ancient world was not rooted in the cult of facts, but in the desire to be useful in shaping readers. Hence, Levi's calling may appear as a historical fact—an assertive speech act—but within the narrative, it functions as a declarative (Levi's identity is changed) and directive (the disciples should act this way). This aspect may be translated as 'this is how you should value others' or 'this is how you must act.' (6) The notion of 'call story' is different. It has a weak form in modern culture, as an invitation, but without the strong implications for identity and lifestyle change. Here the call story functions more like a summons to change one's identity, as in a military call to duty or a call to a religious order.

These meaning bits are then reconstructed into a story-meaning that is appropriate for the target culture. We suggest the following: 'Jesus calls those into his inner circle whom I would have excluded—people who disgust and embarrass me—suggesting that I am working against the Kingdom of God. I have constructed the entrance requirements as if this was my family, and failed to grasp that God's kingdom is not shaped by my interests. Jesus includes the most dishonorable in the Kingdom, in an egalitarianism that calls and accepts all—and so must I. Hence comes the need for a radical restructuring of my thought, if I am to remain in this group.'¹³ Once this meaning is formulated, the actual-self evaluates its validity by turning to issues of sacred text, the normative value of Jesus' actions, and the ethics of the kingdom of God.

13 From here, readers might also address that culture's conventions of excluding women from the table, as forms of patriarchy (cf. Jerome Neyrey, "Meals, Food, and Table Fellowship," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996], 175–177).

2 Storm at Sea (Mk. 4:35–41)

In this pericope, we focus on how an understanding of worldview shifts the meaning of the event. The disciples are in a boat when a windstorm arises.¹⁴ As the boat is being swamped, the disciples run to Jesus, who is asleep, and accuse him of not caring. Jesus rebukes the wind, saying: “Peace! Be still!” The wind stops, and Jesus turns to the disciples and says: “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” The disciples are awed at this miracle and respond: “Who is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?”

Readers begin by locating the text in the culture of the intended audience. The first-century Mediterranean worldview did not conceive of winds as controlled by physical forces, but by the activity of spiritual beings.¹⁵ In one text, the angels even weigh the winds before releasing them, so that “the earth is not rocked by violent gusts” (11 Enoch 40:9–11). This is reinforced when Jesus rebukes (*epitimaō*) the wind, and commands it to be silenced (*siōpaō*) and be muzzled (*phimoō*). Indeed, two of these words (*epitimaō*, *phimoō*) are used in an earlier exorcism (1:25), linking these stories as exorcisms.¹⁶ Jesus’ command, often translated “Be still!” (*phimoō*) may be understood as an order to silence, but the more comprehensive “Be muzzled!” is to be preferred, as it covers all demonic activities.¹⁷ The disciples’ seeming question (“Do you not care”) has the feel of “an accusation rather than the typical request for help.”¹⁸ Jesus’ response, also in the form of a question, has the feel of a counter-accusation: “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” This notion of faith, given the events to this point in Mark, suggests the twin convictions that the king-

14 While there are parallels to the Jonah narrative (intertextuality), we lack space to discuss these.

15 Cross-cultural disjunction. For examples of winds as controlled by spirits, see Chapter 2, fn. 46–47, and text. For a similar assessment, cf. Adela Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 261. Note that the Epicureans did have a physical theory of causation for winds (cf. David Konstan, “Epicureanism,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy*, ed. Christopher Shields [Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003], 237–252), but Epicureanism was rejected by religious Jews because of its atheism (cf. m. Sanhed. 101).

16 This is the only other place where *phimoō* occurs in Mark; also note the parallels in the final lines of each story: “Who (*tis*)/what (*ti*) is this ... they obey (*hypakouō*) him.”

17 See standard lexicons, and its use in muzzling an animal (1 Cor. 9:9). Collins writes: “Jesus’ command to silence is first and foremost a ‘muzzling’ of the spirit, which is analogous to the ‘binding’ involved in many effective rituals” (*Mark*, 173).

18 Robert Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, Word Biblical Commentary 34a (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 266.

dom of God is present, and that Jesus has authority over spirits.¹⁹ The disciples' response, "And they were filled with great awe" (literally: "feared with a great fear"), is given concrete expression in their final question: "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" This suggests that the disciples did not expect Jesus to have authority over the wind-spirit, reflecting a conviction that Jesus is only human and so has neither the right (*exousia*) nor the power (*dunamis*) to command them.²⁰ Once this worldview is delineated, readers overwrite their reading-self with these convictions.

Next, readers enter and experience the storyworld. Readers have already identified with the disciples, and so have assigned their way of being in the storyworld to the disciples. Hence, we find ourselves in the boat when a wind-storm arises.²¹ Initially, we may have thought of the wind as due to spiritual involvement, but without malice, and so attempted to row the ship to shore. But soon the windstorm is so violent that it is clearly the work of a powerful wind-spirit that is attempting to kill us, and we begin to desperately fear for our lives.²² Finally we wake Jesus, who is sleeping while we are dying, and accuse him of not caring. We know that Jesus has some special connection to God, given the miracles we have witnessed, so why is he not praying for God's help?²³ Instead of praying, however, Jesus orders the wind to be muzzled. This comes as a shock: does Jesus not realize that the spirit will turn its attack specially upon us?²⁴ Why would anyone dare to order a spirit without at least praying for God's protection? This is followed by yet another shock: the spirit obeys him!

This is a radical intracultural disjunction, as humans do not successfully command spirits. Reading stops and the attentional focus shifts to the actual-self, who attempts to reason out the issues. Here the actual-self creates an account of the reading-self's experiences. In their culture, humans have neither the intrinsic authority or power to affect a spiritual being. Consequentially, exorcists either attempt to influence a spiritual being with authority over the

19 The notion of faith/believing has only occurred in 1:15 and 2:5. With this limited background (naïve reading), faith is best understood as the conviction that the kingdom of God is both present and unfolding in Jesus' ministry, as made visible in his unique authority over spirits (1:22–27).

20 On the cognitive map of authority, as well as these Greek words, cf. Chapter 2, fn. 60.

21 Perceptual point of view.

22 Conceptual point of view (wind is demonic); indirect cognitive empathy ("trying to kill us"); indirect emotional empathy ("desperately fear"); and interest bias (goal of staying alive).

23 Indirect cognitive empathy. On miracle-workers using prayer, cf. Chapter 2, fn. 61.

24 Indirect cognitive empathy, as validated by similar stories in that culture (cf. 1QapGen 21); conceptual point of view on spirits and interest point of view in avoiding spirits.

problematic spirit (obtain God's help), or access some type of external power to overwhelm the spirit (amulets, roots).²⁵ However, in the Markan miracle stories to this point, Jesus does not employ prayer, sacrifices, amulets, incantations, or even God's name.²⁶

The resolution to this disjunction is given earlier in Mark, where a spirit cries out: "Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God" (1:24). This suggests that Jesus is higher on the scale of authority than demons, so that he may issue commands.²⁷ It adds to the theme of Jesus' identity, as begun in the first verse of this Gospel,²⁸ here suggesting that his authority is somewhere above that of a powerful wind-spirit. This may be added to Jesus' proclamation of forgiveness (2:5), abrogation of Sabbath rules (2:28), and sending out of the angels (13:27), which also suggests an authority above that of humans.²⁹ In short, this is part of a developing theme on Jesus' identity, and here reveals that Jesus' authority is—at a minimum—that of a high-level angel.

Once the disjunction is resolved, the attentional focus returns to the reading-self, and reading resumes. Jesus turns to us, and asks why we were afraid, almost as a rebuke to us, as if we should not have been fearful. Then he asks why we did not have faith, almost as if we should have known better. Given our resolution to the disjunction—that Jesus has intrinsic authority—we-as-readers immediately form an appropriate response: 'We should not have feared, as we know that you have authority over spirits; we should have believed that we were safe.'³⁰ But in the storyworld, we-as-disciples do not respond to those questions. We only express our amazement and confusion: "Who is this ... that even

25 Social description, social institutions. On the types of miracle workers in this culture, cf. Eric Douglass, *Reading the Bible Ethically: Recovering the Voice in the Text* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 230 fn. 58, 235 fn. 65.

26 Cf. John Meier: "Jesus—contrary to common practice in the ancient world—does not actually pray to God, lay on hands, or use elaborate incantations, spells, or religious objects. He does not even cast out demons 'in the name' of someone, as opposed to the early Christians ... All Jesus does is 'rebuke' (*epitimaō*), 'command' (*epitassō*), and 'cast out' (*ekballō*) the demon" (*A Marginal Jew*, vol. 2, The Anchor Bible Reference Library [New York: Doubleday, 1994], 406; cf. 541–552).

27 A shift in the cognitive map of authority. It is the comment on 'destruction' that marks Jesus' authority (cf. Chapter 2, fn. 66 and text).

28 Mk. 1:1 identifies Jesus as "son of God," though this first-century title did not have divine implications, and was often used of Israel's kings. But this is only the initial understanding of the term. Through the events in Mark (exorcisms, proclamations, baptism, transfiguration), the author shifts the reader's understanding of this title.

29 Changes in the cognitive map, and the disciples' conceptual point of view.

30 Indirect cognitive empathy, as a response is expected to Jesus' questions.

the winds and waves obey him?”³¹ Clearly, our minds in the storyworld are still stuck on the disjunction, and can only grasp Jesus as something unknown and unclassifiable, and this creates fear.³² So, it appears that Jesus has won his argument with the demonic realm, but has not won his argument with us, and this bodes poorly for our next encounter with spirits. Indeed, it causes us to remember a line from the Parable of the Sower, where the shallow people fall away when trouble arises (4:17).

From this event readers create story-meaning. Several threads of meaning are central here. First, the story reveals that Jesus has authority over wind-spirits. This is part of a developing theme on Jesus’ identity and authority, as noted above. Furthermore, this theme is mirrored in the surprise and questions of the surrounding characters: “What is this ... He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him” (the crowd, 1:27), “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him” (the disciples, 4:41), “Where did this man get all this ... wisdom ... power” (the hometown folk, 6:2), and “By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you the authority to do them?” (the religious leaders, 11:28). The question is never if he performed these miracles, but by what authority or power he did them. Hence, it comes as no surprise that some attribute his power to higher-level demons (3:22; cf. Pseudo-Philo 34:1–5).³³ Readers might well conclude that Jesus has authority over all types of spirits, and uses his authority to stop their damaging activities. In this manifestation of the emerging kingdom of God (1:10–12), we need not live in fear of spirits any longer—at least for our time in the storyworld.

This meaning is then translated into the target culture. Clearly, the meaning that ‘Jesus has authority over spirits so that we need not fear them’ needs translated. Each culture would understand this meaning in different ways, as the terms are located in different worldviews. Our readers begin by abstracting the term ‘demon’ to the point where the categories of meaning in the source culture match those in the target culture. For this text, the centrally meaningful elements involve the notion of causation and intention: spirits cause storms and intend to harm humans. Hence, this term may be abstracted to ‘spiritual pow-

31 Direct cognitive empathy, emphasizing their confusion over Jesus’ authority, and lack of understanding on his identity.

32 Direct emotional empathy. This is dramatic irony, where the readers know more than the characters.

33 Using cross-cultural models, Christian Strecker notes: “Exorcists from varied cultures derive their power not within themselves, but from some godlike power, as ‘possessed beings’ or ‘mediums’” (“Jesus and the Demoniacs,” in *The Social Setting of Jesus and The Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce Malina, and Gerd Theissen [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002], 126).

ers that control life's events in order to harm humans.' However, this abstraction has not yet reached the level of common categories, and so must be abstracted further, to deeper categories, such as 'malevolent non-human forces that intentionally harm human life' or 'external influences that damage humans.'

Every culture has the notion of influences outside of humans that damage human life, though each culture conceives of them differently, that is, each locates them in different aspects of their symbolic universe. For modern culture, this might be enculturated as the harm caused by the imposition of an ideal body-image, by the peer pressure that excludes and maligns others, by the controlling influence of unmitigated racism, by materialism as the shaping influence on one's identity, or by uncontrollable road rage, but—and this is the important point—it is not enculturated as windstorms or epilepsy. When looping these translated meanings back to the experienced event, the former group bears a functional similarity to the first-century event, while wind and epilepsy do not.

This results in the following story-meaning: 'In this manifestation of the kingdom of God, spiritual and cultural influences—however one conceives of them—no longer have final control over us, for Jesus has delivered us to a radical new freedom; consequently, we can no longer blame these evils for our choices, as if racism, body-image, or materialism had the power to control our actions. We are now part of God's kingdom where Jesus has delivered us from these powers, even when he appears to be absent.'

The second thread of meaning has to do with Jesus' attitudes and interests: he cares about us and protects us. This connects to meaning bits from earlier stories, as related to the needs of the disciples (healing Simon's mother-in-law), as well as outsiders (healing the leper, paralytic, demon-possessed). This produces the theme that Jesus cares for all people, whether or not they are part of his movement, and so suggests that all people have value. This meaning is already in relatively common categories, though the concrete manifestations—in various social institutions—will shift with the culture in view.

The third thread involves a specific characterization of the disciples, namely, their fear and lack of faith. This is the first event detailing their lack of faith, though the possible causes were outlined in the allegorical interpretation of the Parable of the Sower.³⁴ Future events will link the disciples' fear to their lack of insight and stubborn refusal to believe. These are especially evident in the second sea event, for the disciples are again "terrified" (*terassō*, 6:50), as if

34 Our readers are interested in what the Markan author is trying to say, and not what does or does not go back to the historical Jesus.

they learned nothing from the present story. Indeed, the disciples do not appear to have learned anything from their first confrontation with spirits (1:22–27), where Jesus’ authority was clearly laid out. This suggests that their lack of faith is linked to spiritual blindness, a theme that was initiated at 4:10–12, and will be developed in later events, with an explanatory node at 8:17–21 (“Do you not perceive or understand ... hearts hardened ... not see ... not hear ... still not understand”). Readers might well conclude that a lack of faith results in blindness to God’s presence and work in the world, and can only result in a life characterized by uncertainty and fear.

This story-meaning is then translated into the target culture. The emotion of fear is common to both cultures, as is the notion of blindness to the work of God. The notion of ‘faith’ is relatively common, though with a shift in nuance. In first-century culture, this has the implication of conviction or sureness, while in modern culture it lacks this degree of confidence.³⁵ Translating this results in the following story-meaning: ‘Our fear of spiritual evil—however we conceive of it—is rooted in our lack of conviction that God is present at all times, including when God appears to be asleep or absent, and this results in a spiritual blindness to fails to see God anywhere.’

3 The Woman with a Hemorrhage (Mk. 5:25–34)

In this pericope, we focus on how identification shifts the meaning of the event. This narrative opens with a hemorrhaging woman who has spent all her resources on physicians, and now comes through the crowd to touch Jesus, absolutely convinced that he can heal her. After touching his garment and being healed, Jesus recognizes that power “has gone out of him,” and turns to ask: “Who touched me?” The disciples respond: “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” The woman comes forward and confesses her actions, at which point Jesus says: “Your faith has made you well.”

Readers begin by locating the text, and so recognizing the significance of bleeding in first-century Jewish culture. This rendered the woman unclean, along with anyone whom she touched.³⁶ While being unclean had limited

35 Cf. Ceslas Spicq: “(Faith) always implies confidence, which is expressed in human relationships as fidelity, trust, assurance, oath, proof, guarantee” (*Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, vol. 3 tr. and ed. James Ernest [Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994], 110).

36 Some scholars suggest that uncleanness plays no part in this story, but this is to be rejected for four reasons: (1) Mark emphasizes uncleanness by having Jesus being touched and

effects, it did result in social and religious isolation, along with the connotation of being abnormal and out of place.³⁷ As Neusner summarizes: “What is unclean is abnormal and disruptive of the economy of nature.”³⁸ Healing, in this period, could take several forms, including the administration of powerful objects (amulets, roots), engagement with spirits (incantations, prayers, sacrifice, dreams), and the rebalancing of a person’s constitution (theory of the humors).³⁹ The statement that she “came up in the crowd” suggests that she contaminated the crowd with her uncleanness.⁴⁰ The comment that she only touched Jesus’ garment, suggests a ‘divine man’ miracle, but the requirement of faith speaks against this.⁴¹ The disciples’ response to Jesus’ question has the quality of a personal attack (“You see ... you say”), suggesting that they “think that Jesus’s question is ludicrous.”⁴²

then touching unclean persons in these intercalated stories (5:28, 41); furthermore, Mark sets the hemorrhaging woman’s story inside that of the enfranchised synagogue official, so emphasizing the contrasts of clean/unclean, enfranchised/disenfranchised, rich/poor, and religious/religiously isolated; (2) Mark makes this a theme, by also having Jesus touch a dead girl and a leper, associating with unclean people, permitting one to eat with unclean hands (7:2), and eating unclean foods (7:14–15); cf. Neyrey, “Purity in Mark,” 111–113; (3) Mark repeatedly—if only implicitly—asks readers if people are too unclean for Jesus’ attention (the Legion, the woman with a hemorrhage, and the dead girl); and (4) authors routinely omit implications that are obvious to the audience.

- 37 Love notes: “According to the Pharisees’ world order, the hemorrhaging woman is ‘dirt.’ She is ‘out of place,’ not whole, imperfect” (“Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman,” in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce Malina, and Gerd Theissen [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002], 97).
- 38 Jacob Neusner, “Purity and Impurity in Judaism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Judaism*, vol. 3, ed. Jacob Neusner, Alan Avery-Peck, and William Green (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1110.
- 39 These are rooted in the ancient world’s understanding of sickness, as being caused by sin, accidental contact with powerful substances, offense to the gods, malevolent spiritual forces, or an imbalance of the humors. Peter Bolt notes that when physicians failed, the sick “could turn to gods such as Isis, or Asclepius, but we also know that their problems were of great interest for the magicians” (*Jesus’ Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark’s Early Readers* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 171). For this type of shopping around for healing, cf. Sir. 38:1–14.
- 40 Cf. m. Sabb. 9:1, m. Nid. 9:3–4.
- 41 Against the divine man theory, esp. see 6:5–6; cf. Paul Achtemeier, “Gospel Miracle Tradition and the Divine Man,” in *Jesus and the Miracle Tradition* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 31–54.
- 42 Robert Stein, *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 270. The disciples could have said this in an impersonal way: “There is a large crowd ... we do not know.” Further, via intercalation, this is linked to the crowd “laughing” at Jesus (5:40).

Next, readers enter this event. In many essays on this text, authors suggest that readers identify with the woman, and so experience the triumph of her faith in a world that marginalizes outgroups. If she were the character of identification, then the meaning would emphasize the clear vision of the woman, resulting in an ideal faith that acts to change the world, even if this requires acting against societal norms. But identification with the woman is based on reading this pericope in isolation from the remainder of the text.⁴³ Her limited appearance does not permit identification to occur for the whole text. She is a minor character who is given an ideal role, where her character is designed to show a model for discipleship, as well as reveal the disciples' flaws. In our analysis, readers have already identified with the disciples, and so have uptake of this story through their perspective. This identification results in a different meaning, emphasizing the blindness of the disciples to the work of God, even when that work occurs right in front of them.

In identification with the disciples, we are on the way to help Jarius' daughter. As a synagogue official, Jarius can offer our movement respectability and honor, so that it is in our interest to offer as much help as possible, especially in front of this large crowd.⁴⁴ When we hear that a bleeding woman is in that crowd, we stiffen with concern, as Jesus has a habit of helping people who are sick and at the margins of society. We know that she cannot help our movement in any way, as she is socially marginalized, religiously isolated, unclean, and poor.⁴⁵ We would like to guide Jesus away from her and quickly down the road to Jarius' house.⁴⁶ Using kinesthetic language, the text states that the woman came up in the crowd and touched Jesus,⁴⁷ with her reasoning revealed via an inside view.⁴⁸ Despite her conviction in our teacher's power, we are angry that she has contaminated everyone she touched. What will people say when this gets out—nothing good can come of this.⁴⁹ Then Jesus stops, turns back

43 Other scholars base this identification on empathy, or her role as a model of discipleship. These are rooted in different definitions of identification, on which see our discussion in Chapter 5, section on Strategies for Identification.

44 Interest-bias, esp. given the disciples' interest in status, honor, and power.

45 These are based on the disciples' conceptual point of view.

46 Interest point of view, indirect cognitive empathy.

47 Note the continuation of this kinesthetic language in the woman's actions: "came ... fell down ... told him," and how this is matched to an emotional language (fear, trembling) and her thoughts (she said to herself), so creating a vivid image of the woman. This depth of characterization allows readers to fully understand the conflict and its societal ramifications.

48 Direct cognitive empathy.

49 Indirect emotional empathy (anger), conceptual point of view (contaminating others), honor-shame system, indirect cognitive empathy ('What will people say').

to the crowd, and asks: “Who touched me?” We are peeved as Jesus’ question seems ridiculous, given that the people are “pressing in” (*synthlibō*: used twice for emphasis) on all sides.⁵⁰

At this point, dramatic irony intrudes, for we-as-readers already know that the woman has been healed by Jesus’ power. Hence, we-as-readers hope that the disciples will respond to Jesus’ question with understanding: “The woman you healed,” or at least with kindness: “There are lots of people pushing on us.” Instead, we-as-disciples respond with irritation and annoyance: “You see the crowd ... How can you say: ‘Who touched me?’” This split within readers is resolved when the disciples learn of the miracle: the woman falls at Jesus’ feet and reveals “the whole truth.”⁵¹ At this point, we recognize that we-as-disciples missed the miracle that happened right in front of us. We are shocked—and this shock creates a disjunction.

At this point, the attentional focus moves to the actual-self, who attempts to reason this out. How can it be that we are Jesus’ disciples and proclaim to know him best, and yet did not see this? Indeed, how can this unclean, impoverished, and disenfranchised woman see so clearly, while we—the people who spend the most time with Jesus—seem so blind? After all, we are the ingroup! This echoes Jesus’ earlier indictment of outsiders as having “eyes that do not see” (4:12). In this story, we recognize a disturbing development in the theme of blindness: we not only failed to understand the parables (4:13), but failed to see the miracle that happened right in front of us, and so are acting like the outsiders Jesus warned about.

The story-meaning, for this event, has three central strands. The central meaning, given our identification with the disciples, is that we did not see the miracle, and so are blind to the work of God. This picks up several meaning bits from earlier sections (eyes that do not see, failure to understand, lack of faith), adding to the theme of our blindness to God’s work. For translation, the notion of ‘blindness to the work of God’ is already in common categories.

A second central meaning is that Jesus reaches out to a marginalized, powerless, impoverished, and unclean woman, and does so before finishing his work with an enfranchised, powerful, rich, and clean man. Here it is central to understand the meaning of sickness for the intended audience. Sickness does not represent a physical disease, and translating it as such misses the point, as well as the central drama. Her sickness would most likely have been viewed as the result of her polluting sins, and she would have evaluated herself as unclean,

⁵⁰ Direct cognitive empathy (the disciples’ comments), indirect emotional empathy (being peeved; this is reinforced in the linked story of Jarius, where the crowd laughs at Jesus).

⁵¹ Kinesthetic language.

abnormal, and out of place. She would experience the shame of her pollution, as well as the societal evaluation of 'sinful' and 'contaminating.' She would feel abandoned by God and the religious community, as if she had little or no value to either. As Malina and Rohrbaugh summarize: "Illness is not so much a biomedical matter as a social one. It is attributed to social, not physical, causes. Thus sin and sickness go together."⁵²

Hence, when Jesus stops to deal with the hemorrhaging woman before the healthy man, Jesus is essentially stating that all people have equal value. This picks up several meaning bits from earlier sections, where Jesus helps unclean and marginalized people (leper, demoniac, toll-collector, sinners). Jesus assigns value with complete disregard for anyone's social or religious standing, as if value were an intrinsic property, so that all deserve healing and restoration. This is the symbolic embodiment of a radical egalitarianism. Along with Jesus' healing of the hemorrhage comes the woman's restoration to community, as well as the praise of her faith and (culture flouting) action.⁵³ For translation, the notions of 'equal value' and 'disregard for social standing' are already in common categories.

The third central meaning is that Jesus is not a regular human. While the ancient world had many miracle workers, virtually all accessed some type of external power, as found in objects (amulets, roots) or through accessing a spiritual power (prayer, sacrifice). The present healing, by touching a man's clothes, does not fit. This creates a radical intracultural disjunction, but unlike the Storm at Sea miracle, here the disjunction is not over authority (*exousia*) but power (*dunamis*). Jesus appears to have intrinsic power over maladies. This adds to the increasingly problematic theme of Jesus' identity.

These meanings are then translated into a story-meaning that is appropriate for the target culture. We suggest the following: I missed the miracle that happened right in front of me! I had evaluated Jesus as ridiculous, with his stupid question about people touching him, but instead, I realize—suddenly and with surprise—that I am the one with eyes that do not see. This woman may have been unclean and contaminating, and so an outsider to the entire community, but I am the true outsider. Indeed, the person I evaluate as a social outcast has entered the kingdom ahead of me: Jesus proclaimed her faith,

52 Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992), 210.

53 As Wendy Cotter notes: "Jesus grants the honor of the cure to her ... the decision she took to touch him" ("Mark's Hero of the Twelfth-Year Miracles: The Healing of the Woman with the Hemorrhage and the Raising of Jairus's Daughter (Mark 5:21-43)," in *A Feminist Companion to Mark*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine [Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2001], 60).

not mine. She sees clearly, and that seems to be the point: she sees who Jesus is, while I am still in the dark. Jesus healed with overwhelming power, and yet I still think of him as ‘only a teacher.’ But I have made yet another error, as I would have excluded this outcast, while my teacher privileges her. I have missed Jesus’ radical egalitarianism. Entrance into this new kingdom is open to all with clear vision and faith. Hence, I must see Jesus for who he is, I must act in faith on that sight, and I must see people—all people—as having value to God. Only then can Jesus turn to me and say: “Your faith has made you well.”

4 **The Parable of the Sower (Mk. 4:3–20)**

In this collection of three pericopae, we will emphasize the literary effects created by identification and sequentially connected events. As this is a longer discussion, we will mark the beginning of each new section, these being: The Text, Locating the Text, Entering and Experiencing the Text, and Creating Story-meaning.

The Text: This collection begins with a story about a farmer who plants a field. Some seed falls on the path, some on shallow ground, and some in the weeds, and these never come to fruition—though the words describing their destruction are all violent. One final group falls in good soil, and yields a harvest. Next, the group around Jesus, including the disciples, ask him about the meaning of the parable, and Jesus responds:

To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven. Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables?

Finally, Jesus explains the parable as an allegory, providing multiple reasons for seeds not coming to fruition: “Satan ... trouble or persecution ... the cares of the world, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things.” Some seeds do come to fruition, providing an average to good harvest.

Locating the Text: Our readers begin by locating the elements in first-century culture, along with making connections between the various sections. In the first section, the farmer plants with a broadcast method, with the understanding that some of the seed will always fall or be blown into poor soil. However, the manner of farming is not under critique here—the text reveals no interest in this—but only in the fate of the seeds. The words for the destruction of the

seeds and plants are of special interest, as they are graphic words where the seed “is violently destroyed.”⁵⁴ The violence of this destruction is unexpected, and so becomes a central focus for the reader’s attention and contemplation.⁵⁵ This is especially the case for people living at a subsistence economic level, with concerns that a poor harvest would lead to disaster. The destruction is due to environmental forces—birds, thin soil, weeds—and has nothing to do with the potency of the seeds. The final harvest is not spectacular, but only average to good.⁵⁶ It certainly does not fit into the superabundance that is typically seen in ‘eschatological harvest’ passages.⁵⁷ Finally, while readers know that parables are designed to illuminate some aspect of the world, in this parable the area for comparison has been suppressed.⁵⁸ While most parables identify the referent as the kingdom of God, here none is mentioned, and the context does not provide any obvious one.

The second section begins with the confusion of the disciples over the parable’s meaning. Jesus states that the disciples should understand it as they have “the secret of the kingdom,” though no such secret is apparent in earlier sections. This is followed by a reference to Is. 6:9–10, explaining the use of parables, and raising the specter of outsiders and insiders, along with a possible criterion

54 Guelich, *Mark*, 194. The first word, to devour, is not the usual word for ‘to eat’ (*esthiō*), but is a violent emotional word for ‘to consume, to destroy’ (*katesthiō*; cf. its usage in Mk. 14:40, Lk. 15:30). Similarly with ‘to scorch, as with fire’ (*kaumatizō*; cf. Rev. 16:8–9) and ‘to close in on one, to choke’ (*sumpnigō*).

55 Some emphasize the end due to “the so called ‘law of concluding emphasis’” (Gerd Theissen and Anette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996], 331), but while readers may race toward the ending/resolution, this does not mean that their attention rests there. In this parable, the averageness of the harvest causes readers to turn back to the strong, graphic, and violent words.

56 Similarly Bernard Scott, *Hear Then the Parable* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 357; Guelich, *Mark*, 195; Donald Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 369.

57 For an example, cf. 2 Baruch 29:3–8. Esp. see Stein, *Mark*, 200.

58 Technically, this is a form of hypocatastasis, where the referent of the comparison is suppressed, under the expectation that the context will provide such. In the present example, there is no clear referent in the context. Following the terminology in Harvey McArthur and Robert Johnston (*They Also Taught in Parables* [Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1990]), this parable has ‘an introductory formula’ and ‘parable proper,’ but is missing the ‘illustrand’ (“the matter to be illustrated, proved, or explained” Ibid., 109). The illustrand provides the clues to the direction of interpretation, telling readers where to begin the metaphorical transformation. Clemens Thoma uses different terminology, but make the same point (“Literary and Theological Aspects of the Rabbinic Parables,” in *Parable and Story in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Clemens Thoma and Michael Wyschogrod [New York: Paulist Press, 1989], esp. 27–31).

for making this distinction (understanding the parables). The conjunction “in order that” (*hina*) suggests that Jesus is deliberately concealing his meaning, with disastrous results for outsiders.

However, this conjunction, when understood as a purpose clause, creates two problems. First, this meaning is not supported by the larger text, where: (1) Jesus’ core message seems easy enough to understand (1:14–15); (2) the crowds understand enough of his teaching to be searching for him (1:27); (3) the religious leaders are later said to understand the parables (12:12); and (4) one of the leaders is evaluated as “not far from the kingdom of God” (12:34). The second problem is that this meaning overlooks the connections between the three sections, and so misses the function of the middle section. The author uses this section to highlight the disciples’ lack of understanding, and so to suggest that they are at risk of being outsiders—especially given the conclusion: “Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?” (4:13). Hence, this clause *does not function as a factual statement of Jesus’ purpose, but as a warning to those who see themselves as insiders*.⁵⁹

The third section produces an allegorical interpretation of the parable.⁶⁰ Here readers encounter the first clue for interpreting the parable, in the use of ‘word’ (*logos*), which suggests God’s message, in this case as embodied in Jesus’ teaching about the kingdom (1:14–15).⁶¹ The rest of the explanation identifies the causes for the destruction of the seeds and plants, along with the results of a non-characterized “good soil” (suggesting a lack of emphasis on the harvest).

59 This is a form of conversational implicature, as addressed by H.P. Grice’s maxim of relevance (“Logic and Conversation,” in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 167).

60 Most interpreters immediately jump to historical issues, addressing the likelihood of Jesus having said this. Such a discussion is fine for historical work, but not for literary work. Mark is not modern history, but a narrative that was designed to shape its readers through their participatory experience in the events. Readers encounter the allegorical interpretation in the flow of the narrative, and to exclude it is to violate Mark’s design and purpose. Furthermore, even the historical conclusion is suspect. McArthur and Johnston note that application is “part of the normal pattern” for rabbinic parables (*They Also Taught in Parables*, 139), and produce examples of allegories (esp. see *Ibid.*, 141). On the use of allegory in literary texts, cf. Gay Clifford who states that they “communicate certain generalized formulations about the nature of human experience and the organization of the world ... (the author) shapes his narrative so as to reveal these gradually and persuasively to the reader” (*The Transformations of Allegory* [London: Routledge and Kegan, 1974], 7, parenthesis added).

61 Given its usage in 2:2, ‘word’ is connected to Jesus’ teaching, which is detailed in 1:14–15. Only secondarily may it be connected to the church’s special usage for ‘the gospel.’

Entering and Experiencing the Text: Here, we return to the beginning of this text, in order to enter and experience the storyworld. Readers identify with the only human character mentioned, the farmer. We find ourselves in a dusty field, sowing seeds as a farmer,⁶² expecting a good harvest in order to survive the coming winter.⁶³ When the first seeds are destroyed, we feel irritation, as the margin for survival is narrow. As this moves to the second and third groups of destruction, our irritation turns to anger and even desperation, for this story is moving towards a catastrophic failure of the harvest, with the prospect of losing our land, and even starvation.⁶⁴ The harvest at the end is mildly comforting, but does not lessen our alarm at the violent destruction of the seeds. We can only wonder how this could have been prevented.⁶⁵

Then, just when we expect Jesus to apply this to some topic, the parable abruptly ends. Now, parables are comparisons, designed to make something clear by way of comparison. They usually do this with a prompt that points to the direction of the comparison, either as a directional cue (e.g., “The kingdom of God is like”) or from the immediate context (e.g., “Who is my neighbor?” Lk. 10:27).⁶⁶ Yet here we have neither, but only a story about farming, as if the author forgot to make the comparison clear. This creates a disjunction, which initially appears as a casual intracultural disjunction. Reading stops and the attentional focus shifts to the actual-self, who attempts to resolve this disjunction. At this point, we-as-readers assume that the disciples in the storyworld understand the parable, and that we have simply missed the clues in the text. We attempt to resolve this by searching the context for the assumed referent, but without success. In the end, we-as-readers *are left hanging in the storyworld, unsure of where to step next and afraid that any step taken might be the wrong one.*⁶⁷ Without being able to resolve this, we move forward to the next section, hoping for some clarification.

The second section does not disappoint, but opens with us-as-the-disciples asking Jesus for clarification. In other words, this section reveals that the disciples did not understand the parable any more than did we (the actual readers); the disciples’ experience mirrors that of the actual readers. Jesus answers our question by stating that we already have “the secret of the kingdom of God.”

62 Motor resonance, embodied knowledge.

63 Interest point of view.

64 Indirect emotional empathy, interest point of view.

65 Indirect cognitive empathy.

66 See fn. 58.

67 As W.O.E. Oesterely notes, this parable “must have sounded pointless to those who heard it without any explanation” (cited in Scott, *Hear Then the Parable*, 358).

This creates yet another disjunction, as we have not encountered any “secret” (*mystērion*) in the text.⁶⁸ Reading again stops, as we search through the prior events for a referent, but without success. This leaves us doubly confused, over the parable and the key to the parable, suggesting that we have somehow missed the centrally important elements in the text. We can only return to the text, reading further in hope for some clarification. But instead of receiving clarification, we receive a warning about blindness, culminating in “Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?” (4:13). The author appears to suggest that we are so blind that we risk being outsiders, with the possible effect of “not turning and being forgiven.”

Finally, we move to the third section, which explains the parable using an allegorical form of interpretation. But before moving to this explanation, we must ask why the author included it in the first place. After all, if the parables are only opaque to “those outside,” then why do we-as-disciples need this explanation? Should not the meaning be obvious? Could not the author simply state that Jesus’ followers understood, and move on to the next event? Given the missing element of the parable (the referent) and the unexplained term (“secret of the kingdom”), it is clear that the author designed this parable to be opaque to readers. From the way the parable is told, no reasonable reader would come to Jesus’ explanation. In short, the entire section was designed to reveal the readers’ lack of understanding, so that they would fall under the category of “those outside.”⁶⁹ This suggests that the middle section functions as a warning to readers, that they risk being outsiders because of their own blindness, with dire warnings about the consequences.⁷⁰

The author appears to have created the following literary effects: (1) constructed the parable so that it could not be understood by us-as-readers; (2) emphasized this deficiency by having us-as-disciples ask for the meaning of the parable; (3) evaluated this deficiency as a kind of blindness; (4) connected this blindness to being outsiders, with the possibility of terrible consequences; and (5) provided an allegorical interpretation that details the possible reasons for our blindness (below).

68 Jesus did address the kingdom of God (1:14–15), but did not proclaim this secretly or as a secret.

69 Similarly Robert Fowler: “Because the reader does not possess this touted ‘secret of the Kingdom of God,’ the reader must therefore be an outsider” (*Let The Reader Understand* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991], 169; cf. Donald Juel, “Encountering the Sower,” *Interpretation* 56 [2002]: 280).

70 John Donahue notes that “the disciples are warned that they can become outsiders for whom everything happens in riddles” (*The Gospel in Parable* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988], 32).

Now we turn to the allegorical explanation. The central clue is in the opening line, where the farmer is sowing the word (*logos*), suggesting that the seed is God's message. This causes us to reference the farmer as God, and so to wonder how a failure of harvest, under such violent forces, could occur. The author does not let us guess, but makes these forces explicit: "Satan ... shallowness, especially during times of tribulation ... cares of the world, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things." When the explanation is considered in isolation, the author appears to be presenting a list of ways that the word may come to failure. But the larger section has revealed the blindness of the readers, so that these reasons represent a personal inventory—not just of us-as-disciples, but of us-as-readers.⁷¹ As Mary Ann Tolbert states: "The characters ... are all portrayed as the concrete illustrations of these four fundamental kinds of responses to Jesus' word."⁷²

Finally, there is a harvest, but only in the face of great loss and constant threat. The central issue is not that God has a harvest despite the loss, for the lack of abundance and lack of explanation de-emphasize the harvest. Rather, the focus is on how our blindness has contributed to the loss, with the expectation that we will change and become part of the harvest.

Creating Story-meaning: The story-meaning for these events takes two central paths. The first emphasizes the failure of the word to come to fruition in our lives. The warning is that we are at risk of "not seeing ... not hearing ... not turning ... not being forgiven." This failure may be due to Satan (the word was never able to germinate), our shallowness (because we never really believed), or our other commitments (the cares of the age, money, and things). But whatever the reason, the results of remaining blind are devastating, so that the time to change is now.

For theme formation, we have not yet seen the particular issues of blindness or failed harvest. But later events will turn all of these into themes: blindness (e.g., 6:52, 8:17–21), loss of harvest due to money/possessions (e.g., 10:19, 14:11), the activity of Satan (8:33), and the abandoning of the Gospel during trouble (4:35–41, 14:50–52). For translation, many of these notions are already in shared categories, such as planting seeds, expecting a harvest, shallowness, distress, the lure of wealth, and the desire for things. The concrete examples of each

71 Jack Kingsbury suggests that the narrator "speaks past both audiences he addresses, crowds and disciples ... he is addressing the implied reader(s)" (*Matthew As Story*, 2nd ed. [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988], 108).

72 Mary Ann Tolbert, in applying this explanation to Mk. 1:14–10:52 (*Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* [Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 198], 124).

will shift from culture to culture, but the existential notions are in similar categories. Still, translation will need to occur for the notions of Satan (see under 'Storm at Sea' example), and the intensity of this distress in a subsistence economy.

The second story-meaning emphasis involves the outlook of the farmer. When the parable's metaphor is activated, the farmer is coded as God, and all the emotions and thoughts that we had as the farmer are now assigned to God. Hence develops the notion that we have experienced how God feels when God sees the destruction of the good seed and the loss of harvest. God experiences frustration, anger, and even desperation over this loss, whatever the cause. Perhaps this is so personal, and the reaction so intense, because it includes sons and daughters who are created in God's own image. We now have a pale grasp of how God cares for us and our growth, as well as about others, who are also made in God's image. In short, 'the word' is not a supplement to human life and existence, but must be taken with the same seriousness that God attaches to it.

5 The Darkening of the Sun and Moon (Mk. 13:24–26)

In this section, we will focus on the problem of translation. These verses are part of a larger collection of futuristic sayings, with an apocalyptic tone.⁷³ The text reads:

But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

Modern readers often locate these words in the cultural frame of modern science, where the sun being darkened refers to a solar eclipse, the moon not giving its light to a lunar eclipse, and the stars falling from heaven to meteors. Literalist interpreters would see these as signs of the end times, which are tied to a juxtaposition of eclipses and comet appearances. A scientific form of interpretation would see this text as an attribution of celestial mechanics to the

73 This is not the place to rehearse the arguments about whether this is apocalyptic or prophetic in genre. We feel that it is prophetic in genre, but with the utilization of apocalyptic imagery; cf. Richard Horsley, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Mark," in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie*, ed. Leo Perdue, Bernard Scott, and William Wiseman (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 226–230.

gods, due to ignorance of physics. All such interpretations represent a failure to correctly locate this text in the culture of the intended audience.

First-century Jewish culture understood the celestial bodies as either controlled by spiritual powers or as spiritual powers themselves.⁷⁴ These spiritual powers usually stop shining as a portent of terrible events on earth, as in Ovid's presentation of the death of Romulus: "The sun disappeared, and rising clouds obscured the sky, and a heavy rain shower fell. Then it thundered, the air was torn by flames."⁷⁵ But in the Hebrew Bible and intertestamental literature, such events were often attached to the Day of the Lord, with these signs preceding the coming of God.⁷⁶ So Isaiah writes: "See, the day of the Lord comes ... for the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light ... therefore I will make the heavens tremble" (Is. 13:9–13).

Here the emphasis is on the coming of God, and how God's presence causes all created beings, including the powerful sun, moon, and stars, to fall. These are not physical entities metaphorically trembling, but—in this culture—spiritual beings fleeing before the coming of God. The celestial darkness is simple the response of the created beings to the presence of God, no matter what the reason for God's coming. The author of the Testament of Levi puts it clearly: "So when the Lord looks upon us we all tremble. Even the heavens and earth and the abysses tremble before the presence of his majesty" (T. Levi. 3:9).⁷⁷ As Beasley-Murray notes, this "recalls the basic idea of a theophany—namely, the appearance of the Lord of the storm in the world."⁷⁸ In short, when God comes through the heavens, all spiritual beings bow in submission. Craig Evans correctly identifies this as the effect of God's presence, and concludes: "Accordingly, God's appearance does not destroy the cosmos; it frightens it."⁷⁹

Next, readers enter this lecture in the position of the disciples.⁸⁰ We recognize that Jesus' speech is a response to our admiration of the temple. But

74 Cf. 1 Enoch 18:14–15, 80:1, 6–7; T. Sol. 10:2; Sib. Or. 5:514–519. In the NT, cf. Mt. 17:15, Jude 13.

75 Cited in David Cartlidge and David Dungan, *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 194; other examples follow.

76 Cf. Joel 2:30–31, 2 Esdras 7:39–42, Sib. Or. 3:801–809, and Rev. 6:12–17.

77 Cf. As. Mos. 10:1–5, Ps. 77:16–18, Sib. Or. 5:345–352.

78 G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 331. Collins notes that, in apocalyptic literature, these "function as signs of the eschatological divine intervention" (Mark, 614).

79 Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, Word Biblical Commentary 34b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 329.

80 While Mark 13 is likely a collection of sayings, in this Gospel it is grasped as a single, coherent speech.

instead of seeing its beauty, Jesus sees it as a symbol for something gone wrong, and so as marked for destruction. We are shocked at this statement, as the temple embodies sacred space and is the place of God's dwelling.⁸¹ If that space becomes polluted then God will abandon it, and with the loss of God's presence also goes our identity and protection.⁸² This is, perhaps, the worst nightmare that we can imagine: the loss of our God and our identity. The only response can be fear, as we wonder how the world can continue, and how our overwhelming God will act next.⁸³

The text does not leave us to wonder. After the pollution of sacred space (the 'abomination that produces desolation'), God begins the journey to earth. Our first sight of this is in the heavens, as the heavenly powers shake, tremble, burn trails in the sky, and blink out. The most powerful beings do not put up any fight—such is the might of this God. The stars fall from the heavens, the moon turns black, and in the morning, the sun itself stops shining. We are terrified, much like the people were terrified before the mountain of God, afraid that if they heard the voice of God again, they would all die (Deut. 5:22–27).⁸⁴

But just when we expect the text to say: "And suddenly God comes into the city and the temple," we are shocked to hear: "Then they will see the Son of Man." Instead of the overwhelming power of God, we meet our teacher! This creates a radical intracultural disjunction, as the 'sending of the angels' and the 'gathering of the elect' are generally the activities of God.⁸⁵ The attentional focus shifts to the actual-self, who attempts to reason this out. Certainly, this causes us to remember the text from Daniel, where one like a son of man "was given dominion and glory and kingship" (Dan. 7:14).⁸⁶ But this extends beyond the meaning in Daniel. Now this son of man is assuming activity that is generally ascribed to God. It is clear that we have misjudged who our teacher is, and this new presentation creates on the one hand fear, for he is something unknown and exceedingly powerful, and on the other comfort, for we know that he cares about us.

The specific story-meaning for this section is that God is coming, and this should inspire fear. But the point is not that we will experience fear—though

81 Indirect cognitive empathy, conceptual point of view.

82 Conceptual point of view.

83 Indirect emotional and cognitive empathy.

84 Indirect emotional empathy.

85 Evans writes: "The assertion that the 'son of man' will send his angels is astounding ... for throughout the OT it is God who commands and directs the angels" (Mark, 329). William Lane notes that the gathering of the elect is "a function attributed to God in the OT" (*The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], 476).

86 Intertextuality.

we certainly will—but that we must not falter during the final distress: we must neither give into the fear that God is absent nor turn to false worship (“False messiahs ... false prophets ... to lead astray even the elect” 13:21–22). Hence the repetitive warnings that precede and follow this text: “Be alert ... beware ... keep alert ... keep awake ... keep awake” (13:23–37). The central speech act, then, is not an assertive expressing truths about the heavens; it is a directive functioning as a warning: God is coming, so be vigilant and be faithful. This warning is contextualized in two ways. First, horrible events are about to unfold in our world, and God will appear to be absent or inactive. But we do not know the whole story.⁸⁷ God is coming, so remain faithful! Second, these powers in the heavens, who have always affected our lives, are not gods at all. They are the little powers, and when God comes, they will reveal that they have no secure place over us: they will fall. So, remain faithful!

For theme formation, the stars, sun, and moon are abstracted to ‘powerful spiritual beings that influence human life, for good or for ill.’ The notion of ‘not giving their light’ may be abstracted to ‘recognize their weakness and subordination before God.’ These suggest the developing theme that all spiritual entities fall at the presence of God, as revealed in the earlier stories about spirits (windstorms, epilepsy, and sickness). Only here the theme is developed into a cosmic scheme, so that it includes entities that are so powerful that they control human destiny. Nevertheless, these are still little gods, and the message of Mark is that they have been crippled by the incursion of the Kingdom of God into our world. The powers will fall.

For translation, the terms ‘sun, moon, and stars’ are not in common categories. They may be abstracted to ‘spiritual powers that control humans,’ and even further to ‘external influences that affect human life.’ Every culture has the notion of outside influences, whether conceptualized spiritually (astrology), socially (group identities), culturally (materialism), or personally (road rage). The notion of ‘recognize their weakness and subordination,’ may be abstracted to ‘no longer have dominion or control.’ This results in the following story-meaning: Terrible times are coming, and God will appear to be absent. But do not turn to the little gods of this world, as found in your culture. They do influence human life and destiny, but they do not have a secure place and they will not provide you with security—all your wealth and power cannot save you in the coming time of distress. The One God is not asleep and has not abandoned you; indeed, the One God is coming. Be faithful!

87 This notion is especially prominent in apocalyptic literature; cf. John Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 5, 8.

A second theme, for this section, deals with Jesus' identity. Too often, Jesus has engaged in activities that are not appropriate to humans, such as casting out spirits on his own authority, and healing sickness on his own power. Furthermore, he has engaged in activities that are generally appropriate to God, such as proclaiming forgiveness (2:5), being "lord of the Sabbath" (2:28), declaring all foods clean (7:19), and sending out the angels (13:27). We have mistaken Jesus for just a human teacher, and never expected him to come "in the clouds with great power and glory." This is not an assertive speech act, telling us more about Jesus' identity, but functions as a directive: this is who you must hear and follow. This is also a Markan theme, which culminated in the transfiguration scene, with 'the voice from the clouds' stating: "Listen to him" (Mk. 9:7).

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